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WAGNER'S LIFE AND WORKS.

VOL. I. { BIOGRAPHY, * * *
BAYREUTH ECHOES,
WRITINGS, * * * *
CRITICS, * * * *
OPERAS. * * * *

BY

GUSTAV KOBBÉ.

NEW YORK:
G. SCHIRMER.
1890.

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—TO—

CAROLYN WHEELER KOBBÉ.

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PREFACE.

THESE volumes are the outgrowth of an analysis of "The Ring of the Nibelung," published as a pamphlet three years ago. It having passed through four editions, a fifth enlarged and illustrated edition was published last fall. The success of this having proved its usefulness to the lay musical public, the present volumes were undertaken. They make pretense to nothing more than giving as much information as the lay reader would care for concerning Wagner's life and works. For this reason technical expressions and discussions have been avoided.

The biography is based on Dannreuther's admirable story of Wagner's life in Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" (Macmillan & Co.), and upon the "Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt" (Scribner & Welford), many extracts from which are given, so that much of the story of the most interesting years of Wagner's life is told in his own words. That capital book, "Art Life and Theories of Richard Wagner" (Henry Holt & Co.), by Edward L. Burlingame, now the scholarly editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, was also consulted.

In preparing the analyses of the music dramas the writings of Von Wolzogen and Heintz were found valuable aids.

GUSTAV KOBBÉ.

SHORT HILLS, ESSEX CO., N. J., October, 1890.

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BIOGRAPHY.

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HOUSE OF WAGNER'S BIRTH.

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BIOGRAPHY.

RICHARD WAGNER was born at Leipsic, May 22, 1813. His ancestors were natives of Saxony. His grandfather, Gottlob Wagner, who died in 1795, held a subordinate position in the city government. His grandmother, Johanna Wagner, was the daughter of a principal of one of the public schools. Their eldest son, Carl Friedsohn, father of Richard, was born at Leipsic in 1770. He was clerk to the city police court and a man of good education. During the French occupation of Leipsic he was, owing to his knowledge of French, made chief of police. He was fond of poetry and had a special love for the drama, taking part in amateur theatricals, which were given in a building especially set apart for that purpose by the Government. In 1798 he married Johanna Rosina Bertz. The ninth child of this union was Wilhelm Richard Wagner.

He was born in a quaint old house in the Brühl, now No. 88. The date of his birth is inscribed on a white marble slab between the first and second stories. The house is now an inn called the White

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and Red Lion (Der weisse und rothe Löwe). Five months after Richard's birth his father died of an epidemic fever brought on by the carnage during the battle of Leipsic, October 16, 18 and 19, 1813. In 1815, his widow, whom he had left in most straitened circumstances, married Ludwig Geyer, born January 21, 1780, at Eisleben, an actor, a playwright and a portrait painter. One of his plays, "The Slaughter of the Innocents," achieved considerable success. On the occasion of Wagner's sixtieth birthday, in 1873, at Bayreuth, a private performance of this play was given, much to his delight. Wagner honored Geyer's memory and always spoke of him most affectionately. At the time Wagner's mother married Geyer he was a member of the Court Theatre at Dresden, and thither the family removed. Wagner says that Geyer wanted to make a painter of him, but "I was very unhandy at drawing. I had learned to play on the piano 'Uebt immer Treu und Redlichkeit' and the 'Jungfernkranz' from 'Der Freischütz,' two pieces which were then quite new. The day before his death, September 30, 1821, I was playing these in an adjoining room, and I heard him saying to my mother, 'Do you think he might have a gift for music?'" Coming out of the death room Wagner's mother gave a message from her dead husband to each one of the children, saying to Richard: "Of you he wanted to make something." "From this time on," says Wagner, "I always had an idea that I was destined to amount to something in this world."

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When he was nine years old Richard was sent to the Kreuzschule in Dresden. He proved himself an excellent Greek scholar, but was not at all proficient in Latin. He made, however, quite a little reputation at the school as a writer of German verses. Once the boys were asked to write some lines commemorative of the death of a schoolfellow, and Wagner's verses received the distinction of being printed after the excision of much that was bombastic. He was then eleven years old. That he aimed high may be judged from the fact that he began sketching tragedies modeled upon German imitations of the Greek. He also attempted to translate, metrically, *Romeo's* monologue. He states naively that he did this in order to learn English. He was such an enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare that at the age of fourteen he began a grand tragedy, of which he himself says that it was a jumble of "Hamlet" and "Lear." So many people died in the course of it that their ghosts had to return in order to keep the fifth act going. Musically he was deeply affected by Weber's compositions. He knew the airs from "Der Freischütz" by memory, and played the overture "with the most horrible fingering." "My teacher," he adds, "once overheard me doing this, and pronounced that I would come to nothing. He was right; I have never in my life learned to play the piano." When Weber, as he often did, passed the house on his way to the theatre, Richard would watch him with feelings akin to religious awe.

After Geyer's death it became necessary for the

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children to shift for themselves as much as possible. The eldest sister obtained a position at the Leipsic Theatre as leading lady, and thither the mother followed with the younger members of the family, Richard entering school there early in 1828. Owing to the fact that he was put back a class he took a dislike to the school and the teachers, grew negligent of his lessons, and took interest in nothing excepting his big tragedy. At the Gewandhaus concerts he heard for the first time several of Beethoven's symphonies and also his music to "Egmont." Nothing would now suit him except to write music for his own tragedy. From a circulating library he obtained a copy of Logier's thorough bass, but did not make much progress with it. He then took lessons of Gottlieb Müller, subsequently organist at Altenburg, composed a quartet, a sonata and an oratorio. Master and pupil did not get along at all well together. Wagner was too original, too self assertive to submit to Müller's pedantry. His mind now took another literary turn. He devoured the writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann, and thus became acquainted when only in his sixteenth year with material which turns up in some of his works. Thus Hoffmann's "Serapion's Bruder" contains a story about the legendary contest of "Meistersinger" (Hoffmann's misnomer for Minnesingers) at Wartburg (second act of "Tannhäuser"); and sundry germs of Wagner's "Meistersinger" are to be found in Hoffmann's "Meister Martin der Kufer von Würzburg." Ludwig Tieck's narrative poem, "Tannhäuser," was read at the same time.

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From now on Wagner so neglected his studies that they may be said to have practically ceased. He wrote overtures for grand orchestra and dabbled in politics. When he was seventeen years old one of his overtures was performed between two of the acts at the theatre. He says of it:

"I chose, to aid the clearer comprehension of anyone who should study the parts, to write them in three different inks—the stringed instruments red, the reed instruments green and the brass instruments black. Beethoven's ninth symphony was to be a mere Pleyel's sonata beside this wonderfully composed overture. This was the culminating point of my absurdities. The public was fairly puzzled by the persistence of the drum player, who had to give a loud beat every four bars from beginning to end. People grew impatient, and finally laughed at the thing as a joke."

After entering the University of Leipsic in 1830 he had the good luck to find as a master Theodore Weinlig, cantor at the Thomas-schule, who was not only a fine musician but a man of kindly and sympathetic disposition. As late as 1877 Wagner spoke feelingly of his teacher's memory, using words which may well bear repetition as being a criticism on the routine method of technical musical instruction which is still too prevalent:

"Weinlig had no special method. He was simply clear headed and practical. You cannot teach composition. You may show how music gradually came to be what it is, and thus guide a young man's judg-

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ment. This, however, is historical criticism and cannot directly result in practice. The most you can do is to point to some working example, some particular piece, set the pupil a similar task and correct his work. This is what Weinlig did for me. He chose a piece, generally something of Mozart's, and then pointed out its construction and relative length, the balance of its sections, principal modulations, the number and character of its themes and the general character of the movement. My task then was: 'You shall write about so many bars, divided into so many sections, with modulations to correspond so and so; the themes may be so many and of such and such a character.' Similarly he would set contrapuntal exercises, canons, fugues. After a minute analysis of an example he gave simple directions how I was to go to work.

"But the true lesson consisted in his patient and careful inspection of what had been written. With infinite kindness he would put his finger on some defective bit and explain the why and wherefore of the alterations he thought desirable. I readily saw what he was aiming at and soon managed to please him. He dismissed me, saying: 'You have learned to stand on your own legs.' My experience of forty years has led me to think that music should be taught all round on such a simple plan. With singing, playing, composing, take it at whatever stage you like, there is nothing so good as a proper example and careful correction of the pupil's attempts to follow that example."

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This course of instruction continued for about six months, the only known results of it being a sonata in B flat in four movements, opus 1, and a polonaise in D for four hands, opus 2. These were published by Breitkopf & Härtel and betray nothing of the future master, being in the usual form and devoid of any of those harmonic progressions so characteristic of Wagner at a later period. A fantasia in F sharp minor remains in manuscript.

During this time he led a pretty rapid life, after the manner of many German students, but a reaction soon set in and music was again taken up with earnestness. In 1830 he transcribed Beethoven's ninth symphony for the piano, and in 1831 he offered his services to the Bureau de Musique as a proof reader and an arranger. A writer says of him at this time: "I doubt if there ever was a young musician who knew Beethoven's works more thoroughly than Wagner did in his eighteenth year. The scores of the overtures and larger instrumental compositions he had copied for himself. He went to sleep with the quartets, he sang the songs and whistled the concertos, for his piano playing was never of the best." In 1831 he wrote two overtures, one of which was performed December 25 of the same year. Both remain in manuscript. In 1832, at the age of nineteen, he went to Vienna with the view of securing the performance of a symphony in four movements (C major). He was unsuccessful, but it was brought out after a trial performance at a concert in Leipsic, January 10, 1833. Wagner has an interesting anecdote to tell of this work. In 1834 or 1835 he pre-

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sented the score to Mendelssohn, or rather thrust it upon him, hoping to secure another performance for it. Mendelssohn, however, never mentioned the matter again and Wagner was too proud to do so. After Mendelssohn's death all inquiry and search for the manuscript proved fruitless, but in 1872 there was discovered in Dresden an old trunk which had been left there by Wagner during the political disturbances of 1849. Among other musical odds and ends was found an almost complete set of the parts of the missing symphony. From these a new score was compiled, and on Christmas, 1876, after nearly half a century from the date of composition and less than two months before the composer's death, a private performance of the symphony was given at Venice, Wagner conducting. The symphony has no value beyond that which attaches to it as a youthful work of a man who afterward became great.

During Wagner's sojourn in Prague in the summer of 1832 he wrote the libretto of an opera, "The Marriage," which had a highly tragic plot. When he returned to Leipsic he began to write the music for it, a septet, winning the approval of Weinlig. But the verses were destroyed, as his sister Rosalie disapproved of the plot. An autograph copy of the introduction, chorus and septet presented by him to the Würzburger Musikverein is still extant. In 1833, at the age of twenty, Wagner began his career as a professional musician. His elder brother Albert was engaged as tenor, actor and stage manager at the Würzburg Theatre. A position as chorus master being offered

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to him, he accepted it, though his salary was a pittance of 10 florins a month. However, the experience was valuable. He was able to profit by many useful hints from his brother, the Musikverein performed several of his compositions, and his duties were not so arduous but that he found time to write the words and music of an opera in three acts entitled "The Fairies." The plot of this is something in the vein of "Undine." The work has never been performed. In the autumn of 1834 he was called to the conductorship of the opera at Magdeburg. He wrote some fugitive pieces there that were successful and also produced an opera, "Das Liebesverbot" ("Love Veto"), based on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure." The theatre at Magdeburg was, however, always on the ragged edge of bankruptcy. The manager had a pleasant habit of vanishing whenever pay day came around, and during the spring of 1836 matters became so bad that it was evident the theatre must soon close. Finally only twelve days were left for the rehearsing and the performance of his opera. The result was that the production went completely to pieces, singers forgetting their lines and music, and a repetition which was announced could not come off because of a free fight behind the scenes between two of the principal singers, which Wagner describes in the following amusing passage in his autobiographical sketch:

"All at once the husband of my prima donna (the impersonator of *Isabella*) pounced upon the second tenor, a very young and handsome fellow (the singer

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of my *Claudio*), against whom the injured spouse had long cherished a secret jealousy. It seemed that the prima donna's husband, who had from behind the curtain inspected with me the composition of the audience, considered that the time had now arrived when, without damage to the prospects of the theatre, he could take his revenge on his wife's lover. *Claudio* was so pounded and belabored by him that the happy individual was compelled to retire to the dressing room with his face all bleeding. [illegible] formed of this, and rushing desperately to her furious lord, received from him a shower of violent cuffs that she forthwith fell into spasms. The confusion among my personnel was now quite boundless; everybody took sides with one party or the other, and everything seemed on the point of a general fight. It seemed as if this unhappy evening appeared to all of them precisely calculated for a final settling up of all sorts of fancied insults. This much was evident, that the couple who had suffered under the 'love veto' (Liebesverbot) of *Isabella's* husband were certainly unable to appear on this occasion."

The writing and composition of the opera had occupied much of his leisure time during 1834, '35 and '36. He left Magdeburg for Leipsic with nothing to live on excepting the interest on his debts, while the principal grew at a rapid rate. Finding nothing to do at Leipsic, he went, after a short interim at Berlin, to Königsberg. There he arranged a concert at the theatre which resulted in his appointment as conductor, and the first thing he did after the appoint-

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ment was to add to his debts by marrying the "leading lady," Wilhelmina, or Minna, Planer. During his sojourn at Königsberg he wrote an overture, "Rule Britannia." The overture "Columbus" was played at one of the concerts which preceded his appointment as conductor. He chafed under the provincial rule of the little theatre and yearned for a broader field for his activity. Hoping to gain a foothold in Paris, he sent a sketch for an opera in four acts, "Die hohe Braut," to Scribe, who, however, took no notice of it. He was, however, soon relieved of the necessity of submitting to the Königsberg routine. The director of the opera followed in the footsteps of his Magdeburg colleague, and declared himself bankrupt. Wagner was not long idle. He received notice of his appointment as conductor and of the engagement of his wife and sister at the theatre about to be opened at Riga, on the Russian side of the Baltic.

His sojourn in Riga is important, for it marks the period when he began the composition of his first great success, "Rienzi." He completed the libretto during the summer of 1838, and began the music in the autumn, and when his contract terminated in the spring of 1839 the first two acts were finished. In July, accompanied by his wife and a huge Newfoundland dog, he boarded a sailing vessel for London, at the port of Pillau, his intention being to go from London to Paris. "I shall never forget the voyage," he says. "It was full of disaster. Three times we nearly suffered shipwreck, and once were obliged to seek safety in a Norwegian harbor. * * * The legend of the

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'Flying Dutchman' was confirmed by the sailors, and the circumstances gave it a distinct and characteristic color in my mind. We stopped eight days in London to recover from the trying effects of the voyage. I was interested above all things in the aspect of the town and the Houses of Parliament; of the theatres I saw nothing." Dannreuther says concerning this stay in London: "They lodged for a night at the Hoop and Horseshoe, 10 Queen street, Tower Hill, still existing; then stayed at the King's Arms boarding house, Great Compton street, Soho; from which place the dog disappeared, and turned up again after a couple of days, to his master's frantic joy. Wagner's accurate memory for localities was puzzled when he wandered about Soho with the writer in 1877 and failed to find the old house. Mr. J. Cyriax, who has zealously traced every step of Wagner's in London in 1839, '55 and '77, states that the premises have been pulled down."

From London Wagner went to Bologna, where he remained four weeks, becoming acquainted with Meyerbeer, whose influence he considered it important to gain. Armed with letters of introduction from him, he set out for Paris, where he arrived in September, 1839, and remained until April 7, 1842, from his twenty-sixth to his twenty-ninth year. This Parisian sojourn was one of the bitter experiences of his life. He at times actually suffered from cold and hunger, and was obliged to do a vast amount of the most uncongenial kind of hack work. He lodged in a remote quarter, Rue de la Tonnellerie, in a house which is

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said to have been the birthplace of Molière. Meyerbeer's letters insured him polite attention, but nothing more. He could not have "Rienzi" performed, but his "Liebesverbot" was accepted for the Renaissance. Elated by his prospects of artistic and financial success, Wagner at once moved into better quarters in the Rue de Helder, but on the very day of his moving the theatre failed and was closed. In these straits he even offered himself as a chorus singer at a small Boulevard theatre, but could not obtain the position for lack of voice. He composed a number of songs, among them the "Two Grenadiers," into which he introduced the "Marseillaise." This song was not a very satisfactory composition, but three others, "Dors, Mon Enfant," "Mignonne" and "Attente" are gems, and one can account for the refusal of publishers to bring them out only on the ground of their merit. "Mignonne" got into print in the pages of a French periodical, and Wagner received a few francs for it. It and the two others appeared as a supplement to Lewald's "Europa," 1841-42.

February 4, 1840, he finished the score of the first truly Wagnerian work. This was revised and published fifteen years later under the title of "A Faust Overture." He conceived it after hearing a rehearsal of Beethoven's ninth symphony at the conservatory in the winter of 1839. In a certain sense it is an autobiographical piece of music, for it reflects the loneliness and wretchedness of his life and character. He had intended to write a complete "Faust" sym-

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phony, of which this was to be the first movement. It had a trial performance at Dresden, July 22, 1844, but was laid on the shelf until 1855, when a revised version was published. Liszt, who afterward became his guardian angel, he met in Paris in 1840, but Wagner was not particularly attracted by his personality at that time. Liszt was then at the height of his fame as an artist, and possibly Wagner was irritated at his facile success. He said of him at that time: "If Liszt ever reaches a better world he will probably treat the angels to a *Fantaisie sur le Diable*," a dig not only at Liszt, but also at Meyerbeer. November 19, 1840, he completed the score of "Rienzi," and on December 4 forwarded it to Von Luttichau, the director of the Opera at Dresden. While waiting the result he contributed to the newspapers and did all kinds of musical drudgery for Schlesinger, the music publisher, making arrangements even for the cornet à piston. In February, 1841, his overture "Columbus" was performed at the annual concert given by Schlesinger to the subscribers to his *Gazette*. It was the only performance of one of Wagner's works at Paris during his first residence there. The score and parts were lost upon this occasion, and have not been found. Previous to this, during the summer of 1840, Meyerbeer had returned to Paris, and through him Wagner secured a personal introduction to the director of the Opera, Pillet. Wagner submitted sketches for a libretto to "The Flying Dutchman," which were accepted.

Pillet, however, wanted to have another composer

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furnish the music, and offered Wagner a sum for his sketches. The matter remained in abeyance until the spring of 1841, when Wagner took refuge from his creditors in the suburbs at Meudon. There he happened to learn that his "Flying Dutchman" sketches had been handed to Paul Foucher for versification, and as he saw no way of protecting his rights, he finally accepted £20 as his compensation. "Le Vaisseau Fantôme," libretto by Foucher and Revoil, on Wagner's plan, but with sundry interpolations of the conventional sort, music by Pierre Louis Phillippe Dietsche (chorus master and subsequently conductor at the Opera), was performed November 9, 1842.

This "Vaisseau Fantôme" proved a phantom ship indeed, as it soon disappeared from the stage. After selling the sketches, Wagner immediately wrote his own version and set it to music, finishing the entire score, excepting the overture, in seven weeks. "After a nine months' interruption of any kind of musical production," he writes, "I had to work myself back into the musical atmosphere. I hired a piano, but when it had come I walked about it in an agony of anxiety; I feared to find that I was no longer a musician. I began with the sailors' chorus and the spinning song; everything went easily, fluently, and I fairly shouted for joy as I felt through my whole being that I was still an artist. In seven weeks the opera was finished."

The overture he could not compose until after an interim of two months' drudgery. He says: "I offered the book of the 'Dutchman' to the directors of Mu-

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nich and Leipsic; they refused it as being unsuitable for Germany. I, poor fellow, had supposed it suitable only for Germany." At Berlin it was accepted at Meyerbeer's instigation, but with small prospect of immediate performance. While casting about for other subjects, he was attracted by the story of the conquest of Apulia and Sicily by Manfred, son of the Emperor Frederick II., and he sketched a libretto, "The Saracens," in which a prophetess, Manfred's half sister by an Arabian mother, leads the Saracens to victory, which results in Manfred's coronation. He never set it to music, as Mme. Devrient, to whom he showed it some years later, disapproved of it. It chanced that a simple and popular version of the story of "Tannhäuser" came into his hands. It made a deep impression on him. He was familiar with the subject from his youthful reading, to which reference has been made. He had also learned that Weber had planned an opera on the subject. The impression was deepened by his reading the mediæval German poem, a copy of which was loaned to him by an acquaintance.

One of the manuscript copies of this poem introduces also the poem of "Lohengrin," and he was thus led to the study of Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Parzival and Titurel." "Tannhäuser" was thus the key which opened to him the rich treasure house of the German mediæval legends. He began the sketch of his libretto during an excursion to the Bohemian hills in July, 1842, and at Teplitz the preliminary outline was completed. Meanwhile "Rienzi" had

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aroused the enthusiasm of the chorus master, Herr Fischer, and of the great tenor Tichatschek, at Dresden, Tichatschek divining that the rôle was exactly suited to his robust, ringing dramatic voice. Then there was Mme. Schroeder-Devrient for the part of *Adriano*. The opera was finally produced, with Reissiger as conductor, the night of October 20, 1842, the performance beginning at 6 and ending just before midnight, to the enthusiastic plaudits of an immense audience. So great was the excitement that in spite of the late hour people remained awake to talk over the success. "We all ought to have gone to bed," relates a witness, "but we did nothing of the kind." Early the next morning Wagner appeared at the Opera House in order to make excisions from the score, which he thought its great length necessitated. But when he returned in the afternoon to see if they had been executed, the copyist excused himself by saying the singers had protested against any cuts. Tichatschek said: "I will have no cuts; it is too heavenly." The third performance was conducted by Wagner himself. After a while, however, owing to the length of the opera, it was divided into two evenings, Acts I. and II. being played the first night, Acts III., IV. and V. the second. Wagner had the same experience with it that he had with his later works. In spite of its great triumph at the place where it was produced, it was slow in making its way. It did not reach Vienna until 1871.

About the time of its production Wagner wrote his lively autobiographical sketch, which was printed in

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the "Zeitung für die Elegante Welt," February 1, 1843. The success of "Rienzi" led the managers of the Dresden theatre to put "The Flying Dutchman" in rehearsal. It was brought out after somewhat hasty preparations January 2, 1843, with Schroeder-Devrient as *Senta*. The opera was so different from "Rienzi," its sombre beauty contrasted so darkly with the glaring, brilliant music and scenery of the latter that the audience failed to grasp it. In fact, after "Rienzi," it was a disappointment. Wagner himself considered the performance unsatisfactory; although Schumann wrote of Devrient's *Senta* in terms of high praise, Wagner himself considered that she rather overdid the part. The opera, however, has not only held its own, but is now considered by all reliable critics of music far superior to "Rienzi." Spohr, on seeing the libretto, was so struck with its excellence that he at once asked for the score, and, recognizing its beauties, he straightway proceeded to produce it at Cassel, where it was given June 5, 1843. Spohr was the only musician of eminence of that day who seems to have met Wagner with anything approaching cordial appreciation. In a letter to a friend he speaks very highly of the work, yet sufficiently critically to make his praise all the more valuable, ending by saying: "I have come to the conclusion that among contemporary composers for the stage Wagner is the most gifted." Wagner states that the opera was originally intended to be performed in one act as a dramatic ballade.

Before the end of January, 1843, not long after the

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success of "Rienzi," Wagner was appointed one of the conductors of the Dresden Opera. He was installed February 2. One of his first duties was to assist Berlioz at the rehearsals of the latter's concerts. Wagner's work in his new position was somewhat varied, consisting not only of conducting operas, but also music between the acts at theatrical performances and at church services. The principal operas which he rehearsed and conducted were "Euryanthe," "Freischütz," "Don Juan," "The Magic Flute," Mendelssohn's music to "The Midsummer Night's Dream," Gluck's "Armida" and "Iphigenie in Aulis." The last named was revised both as regards words and music by him, and his changes are now generally accepted. At the Pensions concerts given under his direction he produced Beethoven's ninth symphony among other works, attracting great attention by his new and poetic reading. In fact, it may be said that this symphony owes much of the progress it has made in popular favor to Wagner's enthusiasm for it. "It was worth while to make the journey from Leipsic merely to hear the recitative of the double basses," said Niels Gade. Rather an amusing remark of Wagner's has come down from his routine at the court church. Speaking of an enormous male soprano who sang there, he compared him with a "huge pudding with a voice like a cracked cornet." He became leader of the Liedertafel, a choir of male voices, and he conducted a festival of male singing societies at Dresden in July, 1843. For this he composed the "Love Feast of the Apostles," a work for three choirs

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of male voices, which, beginning without accompaniment, are finally heard in union with the full orchestra.

This early work in its outlines somewhat foreshadows his very latest composition, "Parsifal," though the music of the two have nothing in common. In 1844, when the remains of Weber were taken from London to Dresden, Wagner conducted the musical services at the reception of the body and the interment, December 14. Among other pieces performed was his funeral march on themes from "Euryanthe." Wagner sought Liszt's aid in the project of erecting a monument to Weber, "not," as he writes in the second of the published letters of the famous Wagner-Liszt "Correspondence," "from idleness, but because I feel convinced that the voice of a poor German composer of operas compelled to devote his lifelong labor to the spreading of his works a little beyond the limits of his province is much too feeble to be counted of importance for anything in the world."

Meanwhile he had worked arduously on "Tannhäuser," completing it April 13, 1844. But before the end of December of the same year he revised it, and it may be interesting to note that nearly a year after its production at Dresden he made a further revision of the closing scene. During the summer of 1845, even before "Tannhäuser" was produced, he was at work on new material, and he returned from Teplitz with sketches for "The Mastersingers" and "Lohengrin."

"Tannhäuser" was produced at Dresden, October

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19, 1845. At first the work proved even a greater puzzle to the public than "The Flying Dutchman" had, and evoked comments which nowadays, when the opera has actually become a classic, seem ridiculous. Even Mme. Devrient, who was *Venus*, and whose scene with *Tannhäuser* in the first act fell flat, said to Wagner: "You are a genius, but you write such odd stuff one can hardly sing it." *Tannhäuser's* narrative, which foreshadows more than anything else in any of his operas his future greatness and his intense dramatic style, and is now considered one of the most inspired portions of the work, was called pointless and empty. Some people suggested that the plot of the opera should be changed so that *Tannhäuser* should marry *Elizabeth*. Wagner naturally felt isolated. He recognized that the opera was far ahead of the times; that it was necessary to educate the public up to his art. He never for a moment considered the feasibility of lowering himself to the level of the public.

"Tannhäuser" made its way slowly. Liszt conducted the overture at Weimar, November 12, 1848, and produced the work February 16, 1849. Wiesbaden followed in 1852, Munich 1855, Berlin 1856, Vienna 1857, the Court Opera House, Vienna, November 19, 1859; Paris, where it made one of the most famous failures of modern times, March 13, 1861. Spohr, who brought out "Tannhäuser" at Cassel in 1853, wrote as follows: "The opera contains much that is new and beautiful, but also several disagreeable attacks on one's ears. A good deal, however, that I disliked at

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first, I have become accustomed to on repeated hearing. Still, the absence of rhythm and the lack of well rounded periods continue to disturb me." Mendelssohn, who, to judge from the innocent respectability of his music, its perfect form and polite melodies, seems always to have sat down to compose in his dress suit and kid gloves, could make nothing of the opera at all. January 7, 1846, Schumann wrote from Dresden as follows: "I wish you could see 'Tannhäuser;' it contains deeper, more original and altogether a hundredfold better things than his previous operas; at the same time a good deal that is musically trivial. On the whole, Wagner may become of great importance and significance to the stage, and I am sure that he is possessed of the needful courage. Technical matter, instrumentation, I find altogether remarkable, beyond comparison better than formerly. Already he has finished a new text book, 'Lohengrin.'" Very different from these fairly generous words were those he wrote some years later: "Wagner is, if I am to put it concisely, not a good musician. He is wanting in the proper sense and beauty of form. Apart from the performance the music is poor, quite amateurish, empty and repelling." This sweeping criticism is not, however, nearly as cutting as Wagner's biting remark about Schumann, that he was "a clever composer, with a certain tendency toward greatness."

To Liszt, who had shown so warm an interest in his music that Wagner's first unfavorable impression of the virtuoso-composer had been effaced, Wagner had sent the score of "Tannhäuser" in March, 1846. In a

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letter dated the 22d of that month he says: "I have ventured to send you the scores of my 'Rienzi' and 'Tannhäuser,' and wish and hope that the latter will please you better than the former." When Liszt was rehearsing the work Wagner wrote these feeling words (January 14, 1849): "Will you really in this evil time undergo the nuisance of tackling my 'Tannhäuser?' Have you not yet lost your courage in this arduous labor, which only in the luckiest case can be grateful?" And shortly after the performance he thanked him in these fervid sentences:

"If I have judged your beautiful action rightly, if I have understood you, I hope you will understand me, too, when, in words as brief and precise as was your action, I say to you, I thank you, dear friend! * * * Thank God! The news from Weimar and Tichatschek's greetings and accounts have again strengthened me. I once more have courage to suffer."

Liszt's reply contained these charming words: "So much do I owe to your bold and high genius, to the fiery and magnificent pages of your 'Tannhäuser,' that I feel quite awkward in accepting the gratitude you are good enough to express with regard to the two performances I had the honor and happiness to conduct."

Wagner wrote in return: "A thousand thanks for your letter! We are getting along nicely together! If the world belonged to us I believe we should do something to give pleasure to the people living therein."

In 1846 Wagner began to be again harassed by

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financial difficulties. Hoping after the success of "Rienzi" that his operas would be produced at the leading theatres, he had made a contract with a Dresden publisher to print the piano scores of "Rienzi" and "The Flying Dutchman." To these the piano and full score of "Tannhäuser" had been added. The venture was not a profitable one and seems to have left Wagner considerably in debt. His position in Dresden was not very congenial. He gradually became the leader of a small, progressive faction, and was looked upon with suspicion by conservative musicians and by the conservative portion of the public, which unfortunately always forms a large majority. In fact, it may be said of a work of art which strikes out in new paths that it is looked upon as a dangerous novelty until some other more daring novelty is brought forward and becomes the *bête noir*. Wagner suffered a good deal from the fact that the leading critic of Dresden, J. Schladebach, a friend of Reissiger, was the champion of routine, and therefore made as little as possible of what he liked in Wagner's operas and as much as possible of what he disliked. Thus he did Wagner considerable injury, not only in Dresden but also in other cities with whose newspapers he corresponded. Wagner's personal peculiarities were also spread before the public. As a result he came to be regarded even by managers who had never come in contact with him as a difficult person to get along with, and his music, even by those who had never heard it, was criticised as being eccentric, and it happened in some cases that

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librettos and scores which he submitted were returned unopened. In those days writers were not treated to the pretty little printed slips which magazine editors now return with rejected manuscripts, and composers probably fared worse. Nevertheless, Wagner was irrepressible.

In 1847, the year in which he first directed the ninth symphony, he worked at "Lohengrin" as savagely as if "Tannhäuser" had been a howling success. By early spring, 1848, the work was completed. He knew that it was even further in advance of the public than "Tannhäuser." The management of the Dresden Theatre, which had witnessed the brilliant success of "Rienzi," and had seen "The Flying Dutchman" and "Tannhäuser" hold their own in spite of the most virulent opposition, looked upon his new work as altogether too risky and put off its production indefinitely. The finale of the first act was performed on the 300th anniversary of the orchestra, September 22, 1848, and this was all the composer heard of the work for many years. A Berlin production of "Rienzi," October 5, 1847, did not prove a success, so that Wagner's circumstances were in no way bettered by it. Nevertheless, we find him in 1848, in spite of the cold shoulder which the management had turned toward "Lohengrin," engaged upon studies for another work. He made sketches for an opera, with the story of the Saviour as the basis. This is interesting in view of his allegorical treatment of the subject in "Parsifal." Then he took up the story of Frederick Barbarossa, but turned from this to the

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myth of the Nibelung. Here, then, we have away back in the autumn of 1848 the first germ of an art production which may be said to have finally gained the admiration of the civilized world, but which was not heard for nearly thirty years after Wagner first put it on paper. Early in 1848 he made a prose version of a drama on the subject of the Nibelung myth, following it up in the autumn with "Siegfried's Death," in three acts and a prologue, written in alliterative verse, and subsequently incorporated with much new matter and many corrections in "The Dusk of the Gods." According to Dannreuther sundry germs of the music were conceived at this early period.

Throughout these years his unsuccessful venture in publishing his scores continued to harass him. At last he turned to Liszt for aid. These characteristic extracts from the correspondence give us insight into his life at this time. In the first he seems on the very verge of despair; in the second he again shows that defiance of ill fortune which was one of the grandest traits of his nature: "I should once more be a *human being*, a man for whom existence would be possible, an artist who would never again in his life ask for a shilling, and would only do his work bravely and gladly. Dear Liszt, with this money you will buy me out of slavery. Do you think I am worth that sum as a serf?" (June 23, 1848.)

"I live in a very humbled condition and without much hope. I depend on the good will of certain people. Every thought of enjoying life I have abandoned; but—let me tell you this for your comfort—I am alive

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in spite of it all, and do not mean to let anyone kill me so easily."

Thinking that political changes might put an end to the routine stagnation in musical matters, Wagner joined in the revolutionary agitation of '48 and '49. June 14, 1848, he made a speech for a political club in Dresden, for which he received a reprimand from the police authorities. In May, 1849, the disturbances at Dresden reached such an alarming point that the Saxon Court fled, and Prussian troops were dispatched to quell the riot. It is said that Wagner carried a red flag and even fought on the barricades, but there is nothing to corroborate these statements. He seems, however, to have thought it advisable to flee, and he went to Weimar, where Liszt was busy rehearsing "Tannhäuser." While attending a rehearsal of this work, May 19, news was received that orders had been issued for his arrest as a politically dangerous individual. Liszt at once procured a passport and Wagner started for Paris, Liszt escorting him as far as Eisenach.

Music was at so low an ebb in Paris that Wagner was unable to make a living there. In June, 1849, he went to Zurich, where he found Dresden friends and where his wife joined him, being enabled to do so through the zeal of Liszt, who raised the money to defray her journey from Dresden.

Several of the most interesting bits from the correspondence relate to this time. The letter in which Wagner begs Liszt to forward to Mme. Wagner the money to enable her to join him in Zurich opens with

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the following characteristic sentences: "Are you in a good humor? Probably not, as you are just opening a letter from your plaguing spirit. And yet it is all the world to me that you should be in a good humor just to-day, this very instant. Fancy yourself at the most beautiful moment of your life, and look upon me cheerfully and benevolently, for I have to offer an ardent prayer." Liszt forwarded to Mme. Wagner 100 thalers, which he procured, as he writes to Wagner, "from an admirer of 'Tannhäuser,' whom you do not know and who has specially asked me not to name him to you."

Wagner, as may be judged from the above, found himself in the most deplorable financial circumstances, and his letters about this time contain urgent appeals for assistance in order that he might have the necessary leisure to proceed with the composition of "Siegfried's Death," which afterward became "The Dusk of the Gods" of the "Nibelung" cycle. The following passages from the correspondence speak for themselves:

"Oh, my friends, if you would only give me the wages of a middling mechanic, you would have pleasure in my undisturbed work, which should all be yours."

* * * * * * *

"I must commence some genuine work, or else perish; but in order to work I want quiet and a home. With my wife and in pleasant Zurich I shall find both. I have one thing in view, and one thing I shall always do with joy and pleasure, work—*i. e.*, write operas.

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For anything else I am unfit; play a part or occupy a position I cannot, and I should deceive those whom I promised to undertake any other task."

* * * * * * *

"You friends must get me some small yearly allowance, just sufficient to secure for me and my wife a quiet existence in Zurich, as for the present I am not allowed to be near you in Germany. I talked to you in Weimar of a salary of 300 thalers which I would wish to ask of the Grand Duchess for my operas, alterations of the same, and the like. If perhaps the Duke of Coburg, and possibly even the Princess of Prussia, were to add something I would willingly surrender my whole artistic activity to these three protectors as a kind of equivalent, and they would have the satisfaction of having kept me free and ready for my art."

* * * * * * *

"The score of 'Lohengrin' will be especially useful to me, for I hope to pawn it here for some hundreds of florins, so as to have money for myself and my wife for the next few months."

* * * * * * *

"The question then is, how and whence shall I get enough to live? Is my finished work, 'Lohengrin,' worth nothing? Is the opera which I am longing to complete worth nothing? Is it true that to the present generation these must appear as useless luxuries? But how about the few who love these works? Should not they be allowed to offer to the poor suf-

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fering creator, not a remuneration, but the bare possibility of continuing to create?"

* * * * * * *

"To the tradesmen I cannot apply, nor to the existing nobility—not to human princes, but to princely men. To work my best, my most inmost salvation, I am not in a position to rely on merit, but on grace. If we few in this villanous trading age are not gracious toward each other, how can we live in the name and for the honor of art?"

* * * * * * *

"Let someone buy my 'Lohengrin,' skin and bones; let someone commission my 'Siegfried.' I will do it cheaply."

* * * * * * *

"If nothing else will answer, you might perhaps give a concert 'for an artist in distress.' Consider everything, dear Liszt, and before all manage to send me soon some money. I want firewood and a warm overcoat, because my wife has not brought my old one on account of its shabbiness."

Liszt took up Wagner's financial cause with the same ardor which he had displayed for his music. That he espoused it also with considerable tact appears from the manner in which he carried out Wagner's suggestion that he give a concert for an artist in distress. "On my way through Hamburg," writes Liszt, "I have yielded to numerous solicitations to conduct in April a grand musical festival, the greater part of the receipts of which will be devoted to the 'Pension

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Fund of Musicians,' which I founded about seven years ago. Your 'Tannhäuser' overture will, of course, figure in the program, and perhaps also, if we have sufficient time and means, the finale of the first and second act, unless you have some other pieces to propose. Kindly write on this subject to your niece, who is engaged for the whole winter at Hamburg, and ask her to come to our assistance on this occasion; for it is my firm intention (not *avowed* or *divulged*, you understand, for there would be much inconvenience and no advantage in confiding it to friends or the public) to set aside part of the receipts for you."

At this time also Wagner gave vent in a letter to Liszt to some of the bitterness which his uncongenial position in Dresden had engendered. Referring to charges that he had shown himself ungrateful to the King of Saxony, he writes:

"One thing grieves me deeply; it wounds me to the very bone. I mean the reproach frequently made to me that I have been ungrateful to the King of Saxony. I am wholly made of sentiment, and could never understand in the face of such a reproach why I felt no pangs of conscience at this supposed ingratitude. I have at last asked myself whether the King of Saxony has committed a punishable wrong by conferring upon me undeserved favors, in which case I should certainly have owed him gratitude for his infringement of justice. Fortunately my consciousness acquits him of any guilt. The payment of 1,500 thalers for my conducting, at his director's command, a certain number of bad operas every year was

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indeed excessive; but this was to me no reason for gratitude, but rather for dissatisfaction with my appointment. That he paid me nothing for the best I could do does not oblige me to *gratitude;* that when he had an opportunity of helping me thoroughly he could not or dared not help me, but calmly discussed my dismissal with his intendant, quieted me as to the dependence of my position on any act of grace."

From the time of his arrival in Zurich until 1852 he was busily engaged in writing, and a number of his important literary works date from that period. Most remarkable of these, on account of the excitement that it created when it was first published and also when it was subsequently reissued in 1869, was his "Judaism in Music." This first appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift* under the pseudonym of K. Freigedank. Its principal effect when it first appeared was to excite the bitter and lasting hostility of a number of professional critics. When the revised and enlarged edition was issued in 1869 over a hundred replies were written, Wagner's argument being, however, entirely ignored, the charge being made and reiterated that he had disgracefully defamed rival composers because they were of Hebrew origin. As a matter of fact, however, Wagner was benefited rather than injured by the attacks made upon his essay. It made few enemies among the Hebrews, who seem to have been too intelligent to have misunderstood him and have been his admirers in large numbers; and the notoriety it gained for him in the newspapers gave his other writings, which had been sadly neg-

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lected by the public, a good sale. Wagner has been considerably criticised for an attack upon Meyerbeer made in his essay "Opera and Drama." But it may be said that Wagner wrote nothing bitter of Meyerbeer personally; he merely criticised his music as artificial and superficial. Nowadays, when Wagner towers so high above Meyerbeer, the matter is not worth discussing at any length and may be dismissed with the simple remark that, after all, Wagner's obligations to Meyerbeer were too inconsiderable to forbid him from criticising the former's music. Moreover, Wagner seems to have had good reasons to suspect Meyerbeer of instigating some of the intrigues which caused the failure of "Rienzi" in Berlin.

Shortly after the first publication of the essay Liszt wrote to Wagner: "Can you tell me under the seal of the most absolute secrecy whether the famous article on 'Judaism in Music' in Brendel's paper is by you?" Wagner, in his reply, gives his reasons for putting forth the essay: "You ask me about the 'Judenthum.' You must know that the article is by me. Why do you ask? I use a pseudonym, not from fear, but only to avoid having my personality rather than my views discussed. I felt a long repressed hatred for this Judaism, and this hatred is as necessary to my nature as gall is to the blood. An opportunity arose when their damnable scribbling annoyed me most, and so I broke forth at last. It seems to have made a tremendous impression, and that pleases me, for I really wanted only to frighten

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them by this method; that they will remain the masters is as certain as that not our princes but the bankers and the Philistines are nowadays our masters. Toward Meyerbeer my position is a peculiar one. I do not hate him, but he disgusts me beyond measure. This eternally pleasant man reminds me of the most turbid, not to say most vicious, period of my life, when he pretended to be my protector; that was the period of connections and back stairs, when we are made fools of by our protectors, whom in our inmost heart we do not like."

Wagner's distinctly literary work of this period embraces also his essay on musical criticism, his "Communication to My Friends," a preface to his operatic poems "The Flying Dutchman," "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin," and his "Opera and Drama." The last he speaks of as a work that will be a great stout volume, of the "greatest importance" to himself and, he hopes, not without importance to others. He seems to have given his time to writing largely from lack of musical inspiration, for in the letter in which he refers to "Opera and Drama" he exclaims: "Oh! would it were spring, and that I might be once more a full blooded, poetizing musician!" ending with a lament over his straitened circumstances: "I am not very well off; care, care, nothing but care, is the funeral chant which I have to sing to every young day."

Besides his essay Wagner wrote a prose version of a drama entitled "Wieland der Schmidt," conducted concerts, gave hints regarding performances at the

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theatre, where one of his most enthusiastic disciples, Von Bülow, whose divorced wife he subsequently married, was one of the conductors, and also gave a reading of "Siegfried's Death" as an illustration to a lecture on the musical drama. "Wieland" he offered to Liszt as a subject for an opera; but Liszt was genius enough to realize the shortcomings of his genius, and never attempted the task. Indeed, one of the most beautiful incidents of the friendship between Wagner and Liszt was the latter's ready acknowledgment of Wagner's overshadowing greatness. At the time these relations commenced Liszt was easily the higher in popular esteem, and could have retained his pre-eminence without much, if any, effort had he chosen to do so. But with a self abnegation as rare as it is sublime (especially in art circles), he stood aside in order that the greater genius of his friend might pass to the front.

The greater portion of the Wagner-Liszt correspondence dates from the years of Wagner's exile; and at this point, when Liszt is about to inaugurate the Wagner movement in Germany by the production of "Lohengrin," it seems proper to quote the tribute of gratitude which Wagner paid to Liszt. He says: "I was again thoroughly disheartened from undertaking any new artistic scheme. Only recently I had received proofs of the impossibility of making my art intelligible to the public, and all this deterred me from beginning new dramatic works. Indeed, I thought all was at an end with my artistic creativeness. From this state of mental dejection I was

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raised by a friend. By the most evident and undeniable proofs he made me feel that I was not deserted, but was, on the contrary, thoroughly understood even by those who were otherwise most distant from me; in this way he gave me back my most artistic confidence. This wonderful friend to me has been Franz Liszt. I must enter a little more deeply into the character of this friendship, which to many has seemed paradoxical.

"I met Liszt for the first time during my first stay in Paris and at a period when I had renounced the hope, nay, even the wish, of a Parisian reputation, and, indeed, was in a state of internal revolt against the artistic life I found there. At our meeting Liszt seemed to me the most perfect contrast to my own being and situation. In this world, to which I had desired to fly from my narrow circumstances, Liszt had grown up from his earliest age and was an object of general love and admiration at a time when I was repulsed by general coldness and want of sympathy. In consequence, I looked upon him with suspicion. I had no opportunity of disclosing my character and aspirations to him, and, therefore, his reception of me was altogether superficial, as was quite natural to a man to whom every day the most divergent impressions claimed access. My repeated expression of this feeling was afterward reported to Liszt just at the time when my 'Rienzi' at Dresden attracted general attention. He was surprised to find himself misunderstood with such violence by a man whom he had scarcely known. I am still touched as

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I recollect the repeated and eager attempts he made to change my opinion of him, even before he knew any of my works, and although acquaintance with me must have seemed without any value to him. He acted not from any artistic sympathy, but was led by the purely human wish of discontinuing a casual disharmony between himself and another being; perhaps he also felt an infinitely tender misgiving of having really hurt me unconsciously. He who knows the terrible selfishness and insensibility in our social life, and especially in the relations of modern artists to each other, cannot but be struck with wonder, nay, delight, by the treatment I experienced from this extraordinary man.

"This happened at a time when it had become more and more evident that my dramatic works would have no outward success. But just when the case seemed desperate Liszt succeeded by his own energy in opening a hopeful refuge to my art. He ceased his wanderings, settled down at the small, modest Weimar, and took up the conductor's baton, after having been at home so long in the splendor of the greatest cities of Europe. At Weimar I saw him for the last time, when I rested a few days in Thuringia, not yet certain whether the threatened political prosecution would compel me to continue my flight from Germany. The very day when my personal danger became a certainty, I saw Liszt conduct a rehearsal of my 'Tannhäuser,' and was astonished at recognizing my second self in his achievement. What I had felt in inventing this music he felt in performing it;

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what I wanted to express in writing it down he proclaimed in making it sound. Strange to say, through the love of this rarest friend I gained at the moment of becoming homeless the real home for my art, which I had longed for and sought for always in the wrong place.

"At the end of my last stay in Paris, when ill, miserable and despairing I sat brooding over my fate, my eye fell on the score of my 'Lohengrin,' totally forgotten by me. Suddenly I felt something like compassion that this music should never sound from off the death pale paper. Two words I wrote to Liszt; his answer was the news that preparations for the performance were being made on the largest scale the limited means at Weimar would permit. Everything that men and circumstances could do was done in order to make the work understood. Success was his reward, and with this success he now approaches me, saying: 'Behold, we have come so far; now create us a new work that we may go still farther.'"

Liszt brought out "Lohengrin" at Weimar, August 28, 1850, on the anniversary of Goethe's birth and the date of the inauguration of the Herder statue. The work was performed without cuts and before an audience which included some of the leading musical and literary men of Germany. While the reception of "Lohengrin" did not at first differ much from that accorded to "Tannhäuser," the performance made a deep impression. The circumstance that Liszt added the charm of his personality to it and

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that the weight of his influence had been thrown in its favor alone gave vast importance to the event. Moreover, it made for Wagner friends in high places, and it may be said that through this performance Wagner's cause received its first great stimulus — in fact the so-called Wagner movement may be said to date from this production of "Lohengrin." Wagner rightly gauged the feelings of professional musicians when he said: "Musicians agreed to my dabbling in poetry, poets admitted my musical attainments; I have been frequently able to arouse the public; professional critics have always disparaged me." A rather clever satirical remark, somewhat in this vein, by one of his opponents may be quoted. This man said: "To me Wagner is greater than Schiller or Beethoven—he composes better music than Schiller and he writes better poetry than Beethoven."

"Lohengrin" was given at Wiesbaden in 1833, and after that made its way quite rapidly, and it has since then held its place in Germany as the most popular of his works, a large percentage of the female population of the Fatherland born since the production of the opera being named after the heroine of the work.

Some highly interesting bits of the correspondence relate to "Lohengrin" and its production. Writing to a mutual friend from Zurich, March 20, 1849, Wagner says:

"Liszt will shortly receive a parcel of scores, &c., from my wife; let him open it. The score of 'Lohengrin' I want him to try at some leisure; it is

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my last and ripest work. As yet I have not shown it to any artist, and therefore have not been able to learn from anyone what impression it produces. How curious I am to hear Liszt about it!"

Liszt was evidently not yet quite ready for a work so advanced (for 1849) as 'Lohengrin;' he at least doubts the practicability of producing it. He writes:

"The admirable score of 'Lohengrin' has interested me profoundly; nevertheless I fear at the performance the *superideal* color which you have maintained throughout. Perhaps you will think me an awful Philistine, dear friend, but I cannot help it."

The work, however, grew upon him.

"All the scores (excepting the overture to 'Faust') I sent to Zurich last week. The separation from your 'Lohengrin' was difficult to me. The more I enter into its conception and masterly execution the higher rises my enthusiasm for this extraordinary work. Forgive my wretched pusillanimity if I still have some doubt as to the wholly satisfactory result of the performance."

But little over a year after Wagner had forwarded the "Lohengrin" score to Liszt, April 21, 1850, he penned from Paris the following pathetic appeal to his tutelary genius:

"Dear friend, I have just been looking through the score of my 'Lohengrin.' I very seldom read my own works. An immense desire has sprung up in me to have this work performed. I address this wish to your heart.

"Perform my 'Lohengrin!' *You are the only one*

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to whom I could address this prayer ; to none but you I should intrust the creation of this opera ; to you I give it with perfect and joyous confidence. Perform it where you like, even if only in Weimar ; I feel certain you will procure every possible and necessary means, and they will refuse you nothing. Perform 'Lohengrin,' and let its existence be *your* work."

Notwithstanding the doubts Liszt had entertained regarding the adaptability of the work for performance, he threw himself heart and soul into the production.

"Your 'Lohengrin,'" he writes, "will be given under exceptional conditions, which are most favorable to its success. The management for this occasion spends about 2,000 thalers, a thing that has not been done in Weimar within the memory of man. The press will not be forgotten, and suitable and seriously conceived articles will appear successively in several papers. All the personnel will be put on its mettle. The number of violins will be slightly increased (from sixteen to eighteen) and a bass clarinet has been purchased. Nothing essential will be wanting in the musical material or design. I undertake all the rehearsals with piano, chorus, strings and orchestra."

Wagner at once became all activity. As well as he could from a distance he superintended the production, sending to Liszt instructions regarding many details. His letters show him to have been in excellent spirits.

"First of all," he writes from Thuny, "I have in

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the inclosed treated of scenery and decorations. My drawings made for that purpose will give you great delight; I count them among the most successful creations of my genius. Where my technic forsook me you must be satisfied with the good intention, which will be clear to you from the literary explanation attached to it. The trees especially presented insuperable difficulties, and if every painter has to perspire over perspective as I have done his art is by no means an easy calling."

Nor were his letters lacking in gratitude to Liszt. Thus he writes:

"Who knows better than myself that in our dear world of the Mine and Thine, of work and payment, I am a pure luxury? He who gives anything to me receives something quite superfluous and unnecessary in return. What do you think, who have taken such infinite pains to dispose of my works? Much as I think of 'Lohengrin,' which you are bringing to light, I think as much and almost more of you and your terrible exertions. I know what these exertions are. When I saw you conduct a rehearsal of 'Tannhäuser' I knew at once what you were to me."

But the most important result of this "Lohengrin" production was its inspiring effect upon Wagner. It stimulated afresh his musical genius, which was in danger of stagnating through lack of artistic sympathy.

"Now," he writes, "you offer me the artistic environments which might bring 'Siegfried' to light. I demand representatives of heroes such as our stage

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has not yet seen; where are they to come from? Not from the air, but from the earth; for I believe you are in a good way to make them grow from the earth by dint of your inspiring care. * * * Well, then, as soon as you have produced 'Lohengrin' to your own satisfaction I shall also produce my 'Siegfried,' but only for you and for Weimar. Two days ago I should not have believed that I should come to this resolution; I owe it to you. * * * I still feel enthusiasm for art, for its own sake; the music of my 'Siegfried' vibrates through all my nerves; it all depends upon a favorable mood, and that you, dear friend, will procure for me. * * * I think the devil will not get hold of me just yet."

At the production of "Lohengrin" it was found to occupy so much time in performance that the management addressed Wagner on the subject of "cuts," requesting him to make them, as he would know how to shorten the work without doing violence to it. With impracticable but noble faith in "Lohengrin" as it was he refused to mutilate his work with his own hand, writing to the director in the following characteristic manner:

"If we yield in small and simple things—if we make concessions to laziness and incompetence, we may be sure that we shall soon be obliged to do the same throughout; in other words, that we must give up every attempt at making a work like the present succeed. * * * You will see from this, most esteemed Herr Intendant, how important it is for me

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not to gain toleration for my 'Lohengrin' by accommodating it to existing evils, but to secure for it a decisive success by making it conquer existing evils."

Liszt, not content with producing the work as perfectly as his own enthusiastic participation in the production would insure, wrote an elaborate and appreciative essay and labored otherwise to further Wagner's cause. Referring to the essay Wagner writes: "If I were to tell you what I felt while reading this article repeatedly and most carefully I should scarcely be able to find words. Let this suffice: I feel more than fully rewarded for my efforts, my sacrifices and my artistic struggles by recognizing the impression I have made upon you of all others. To be so fully understood was my only longing, and to have been understood is the most blissful satisfaction of that longing." He also has a fling at his unfavorable critics:

"The most terrible of all things is a German æsthetic littérateur."

Meanwhile he had found it necessary to completely remodel his plan for a music drama on the subject of the Nibelung legend. The backward evolution of this work is most interestingly described in a letter from Wagner to Liszt, dated November 20, 1851:

"In the autumn of 1848 I sketched for the first time the complete myth of the 'Nibelungen,' such as it henceforth belongs to me as my poetic property. My next attempt at dramatizing the chief catastrophe of that great action for our theatre was 'Siegfried's

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Death.' After much wavering I was at last, in the autumn of 1850, on the point of sketching the musical execution of this drama, when again the obvious impossibility of having it adequately performed anywhere prevented me in the first instance from beginning the work. To get rid of this desperate mood I wrote the book 'Opera and Drama.' Last spring your article on 'Lohengrin' inspired me to such a degree that for your sake I resumed the execution of a drama quickly and joyously: this I wrote to you at the time; but 'Siegfried's Death,' that, I knew for certain, was in the first instance impossible. I found that I should have to prepare it by another drama, and therefore took up the long cherished idea of making the 'Young Siegfried' the subject of a poem. In it everything that in 'Siegfried's Death' was either narrated or more or less taken for granted was to be shown in bold and vivid outline by means of actual representation.

"This poem was soon sketched and completed. When I was going to send it to you, I for the first time felt a peculiar anxiety. It seemed as if I could not possibly send it to you without explanation, as if I had many things to tell you, partly as to the manner of representation and partly as to the necessary comprehension of the poem itself. In the first instance it occurred to me that I still had many and various things to communicate previous to my coming before my friends with this poem. It was for that reason that I wrote the long preface to my three earlier operatic poems, of which mention has already been made.

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After this I was going to begin the composition, and found, to my joy, that the music adapted itself to these verses quite naturally and easily, as if of its own accord. But the very commencement of the work reminded me that I should ruin my health entirely if I did not take care of it thoroughly before yielding to my impulse and finishing the work at a stretch and probably without interruption. When I went to the hydropathic establishment I felt compelled at last to send you the poem, but, strangely enough, something always seemed to restrain me. I was led to hesitate, because I felt as if your acquaintance with this poem would place you in a certain awkward position, as if you would not exactly know what to make of it, whether to receive it with hope or diffidence. At last, on mature consideration, my plan in its logical sequence became clear to me. Listen to me:

"This 'Young Siegfried' also is no more than a fragment, and as a separate entity it cannot produce its proper and sure impression until it occupies its necessary place in a complete whole, a place which I now assign to it, together with 'Siegfried's Death,' in my newly designed plan. In these two dramas a number of necessary relations were left to the narrative or even to the sagacity of the hearer. Everything that gave to the action and the character of these two dramas their infinitely touching and widely spreading significance had to be omitted in the representation, and could be communicated to the mind alone. But, according to my inmost conviction since formed, a work of art, and especially a drama, can have its

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true effect only when the poetic intention in all its more important motives speaks fully to the senses, and I cannot and dare not sin against this truth which I have recognized. I am compelled, therefore, to communicate my entire myth in its deepest and widest significance with the greatest artistic precision, so as to be fully understood. Nothing in it must in any sense be left to be supplied by thought or reflection; the unsophisticated human mind must be enabled by its artistic receptivity to comprehend the whole, because by that means only may the most detached parts be rightly understood.

"Two principal motives of my myth therefore remain to be represented, both of which are hinted at in 'Young Siegfried,' the first in the long narrative of *Brünhilde* after her awakening (Act III.), the second in the scene between *Alberich* and the *Wanderer* in the second act, and between the *Wanderer* and *Mime* in the first. That to this I was led not only by artistic reflection, but by the splendid and—for the purpose of representation—extremely rich material of these motives, you will readily understand when you consider the subject more closely. Think, then, of the wondrously fatal love of *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*, of *Wotan* in his deep, mysterious relation to that love, in his dispute with *Fricka*, in his terrible self contention when, for the sake of custom, he decrees the death of *Siegmund*, finally of the glorious Valkyr *Brünhilde* as, divining the innermost thought of *Wotan*, she disobeys the god and is punished by him; consider this wealth of motive indicated in the

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scene between the *Wanderer* and the *Wala*, and at greater length in the above mentioned tale of *Brünhilde*, as the material of a drama which precedes the two 'Siegfrieds,' and you will understand that it was not a reflection but rather enthusiasm which inspired my latest plan.

"That plan extends to three dramas: (1) 'The Valkyr;' (2) 'Young Siegfried;' (3) 'Siegfried's Death.' In order to give everything completely these three dramas must be preceded by a grand introductory play, 'The Rape of the Rhinegold.' The object is the complete representation of everything in regard to this rape—the origin of the Nibelung treasure, the possession of that treasure by *Wotan* and the curse of *Alberich*, which in 'Young Siegfried' occur in the form of a narrative. By the distinctness of representation which is thus made possible, and which at the same time does away with everything of the nature of a lengthy narrative, or at least condenses it in a few pregnant moments, I gain sufficient space to intensify the wealth of relations, while in the previous semi-tropical mode of treatment I was compelled to cut down and very much enfeeble all this.

"The entire cycle of dramas must be represented in rapid sequence, and their external embodiment can be thought of only in the following favorable circumstances: The performance of my 'Nibelung' dramas will have to take place at a great festival, to be arranged perhaps especially for the purpose of this performance. It will have to extend over three con-

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secutive days, the introductory drama to be given on the previous evening.

"Where and in what circumstances such a performance may become possible I must not for the present consider, for first of all I have to complete my great work, and that will take me at least three years if I have any regard for my health."

The "Ring of the Nibelung" dramas were privately printed in 1853. At least one of them, "Siegfried's Death," underwent not long afterward a change of title to "The Dusk of the Gods," and was treated to an infusion of metaphysics of the Schopenhauer school, which affected also "Young Siegfried" (now "Siegfried") by percolation. The details of these metaphysical changes are described in a thoughtful essay, "Some of Wagner's Heroes and Heroines," by William F. Apthorp, in *Scribner's Magazine*, to which those who are especially interested in this phase of the Wagnerian drama are referred. An investigation of the system of a German metaphysician and its effect upon another person who, besides being a German, is a composer with a strong tendency toward metaphysics, is rather a thankless task, and for the purpose of this biography it is sufficient, as far as the "Ring of the Nibelung" is concerned, to state that its metaphysical significance is explained in the analysis which forms part of Vol. II. of this work.

The letter to Liszt in which Wagner describes the influence of Schopenhauer upon him seems to have been written in the latter part of 1854. In the cor-

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respondence it is given without date. Wagner writes:

"I have of late occupied myself exclusively with a man who has come like a gift from heaven, although only a literary one, into my solitude. This is Arthur Schopenhauer, the greatest philosopher since Kant; whose thoughts, as he himself expresses it, he has thought out to the end. The German professors ignored him very prudently for forty years; but recently, to the disgrace of Germany, he has been discovered by an English critic. All the Hegels, &c., are charlatans by the side of him. His chief idea, the final negation of the desire of life, is terribly serious, but it shows the only salvation possible. To me, of course, that thought was not new, and it can indeed be conceived by no one in whom it did not pre-exist; but this philosopher was the first to place it clearly before me. If I think of the storm of my heart, the terrible tenacity with which, against my desire, it used to cling to the hope of life, and if even now I feel this hurricane within me, I have at least found a quietus which in wakeful nights helps me to sleep. This is the genuine, ardent longing for death, for absolute unconsciousness, total non-existence; freedom from all dreams is our only final salvation."

Wagner's work on his "Nibelung" was occasionally interrupted by other duties. In May, 1852, he superintended the production of "The Flying Dutchman" at Zurich. Writing to Liszt of the performance he says:

"'The Flying Dutchman' has made an indescrib-

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able impression here. Philistines who never go to a theatre or concert attended each of the four performances in one week and are supposed to have gone mad. With the women I have made a great hit. The piano scores sell by the half dozen. I am now in the country and feel tolerably cheerful. My work also pleases me again. My 'Nibelung' tetralogy is completely designed, and in a few months the verse also will be finished. After that I shall be wholly and entirely a 'music maker,' for this work will be my last poem and a littérateur I hope I shall never be again. Then I shall have nothing but plans for performances in my head; no more writing, only performing. I hope you will help me." Fortunately Wagner's own prognostication of his career was erroneous, otherwise we should not have had "Tristan," "Meistersinger" and "Parsifal." The production of "The Flying Dutchman," as may be judged from the above, acted as an artistic incentive upon him and raised his spirits. In the same letter he adds humorously:

"I am sorry to think that you will not be able to manage 'Lohengrin' for such a long time; the pause is too long. As a punishment I shall dedicate the score to you when it appears in print. I do not ask you whether you will accept the dedication or not, for punishment there must be."

But "The Flying Dutchman" satisfied only temporarily the longing to hear his own music that was gnawing at his heart. To look at his scores did not stimulate him. It was like contemplating the face of a beautiful woman who was dumb, yet whose voice

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he was longing to have fall upon his ears. This grief often found expression in his letters to Liszt. Thus, referring to the production of "Lohengrin" at Weimar, he writes to Liszt:

"I control myself violently, and let no one see it; but to you I must confess my sorrow is great not to hear my work under your direction. But I have to bear so many things I shall bear this also." And not long after the production of "The Flying Dutchman" at Zurich he was again in a wretchedly unhappy state. "I am going from bad to worse every day," he writes to Liszt, "and lead an indescribably worthless life. Of real enjoyment of life I know nothing; to me 'enjoyment of life, of love,' is a matter of imagination, not of experience. In this manner my heart has to go to my brain, and my life becomes an artificial one; only as an 'artist' I can live; in the artist my whole 'man' has been sunk. If I could visit you in Weimar, and see a performance of my operas now and then, I might perhaps still hope to recover. I should there find an element of excitement, of attraction for my artistic being; perhaps a word of love would meet me now and then—but here! Here I must perish in the very shortest space of time, and everything—everything will come too late, too late! So it will be."

At times he was so cast down that he turned even from his "Nibelung" dramas: "What fate this poem—the poem of my life and of all that I am and feel—will have I cannot as yet determine. So much, however, is certain: that if Germany is not very soon

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open to me, and if I am compelled to drag on my artistic existence without nourishment and attraction, my animal instinct of life will soon lead me to abandon art altogether. What I shall do then to support my life I do not know, but I shall not write the music of the 'Nibelungen,' and no person with human feelings can ask me to remain the slave of my art any longer." He had hoped that "Tannhäuser" would be given in Berlin early in 1853, but it had to give way to Flotow's "Indra." Smarting under this disappointment he writes:

"I must hear 'Lohengrin;' I will not and cannot write music before." And, "For me there is no salvation but death. Would that it found me in a storm at sea, not in a sick bed. Yea, in the fire of Valhall I should like to perish. Consider well my new poem; it contains the beginning and the end of the world."

In order to satisfy his longing to hear parts of his latest work he arranged a concert at Zurich in 1853, placing a number of pieces from "Lohengrin" on the program. "I undertake the whole thing," he writes, "only to hear something out of 'Lohengrin,' and would willingly abandon the substitute if I could once hear the real 'Lohengrin.'" The work and excitement of preparation and the interest in his art which they reawakened in him greatly raised his spirits and his letters reflect his temporary cheerfulness. Referring to a remittance from Liszt he writes jocosely:

"To my disgrace I must confess that it came very conveniently, although it curiously reminded me of

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the fact that last year I visited the islands of Lago Maggiore at the expense of friend Liszt. Lord knows, I shall always remain a disreputable fellow. Why do you have anything to do with me?"

His good spirits are also reflected in the following extracts from the correspondence: "On May 22 I shall be forty. Then I shall have myself rebaptized; would you not like to be my godfather? I wish we two could start straight from here to go into the wide world. * * * When once I have cast everything aside to dive up to the ears into the fount of music, it will sound so well that people shall hear what they cannot see."

What he wrote of the concert itself is interesting, especially as recording his own impression of "Lohengrin." "Everything went off right well, and Zurich was astonished that such a thing could have happened. The Philistines almost carry me on their hands, and if I cared for external success the effect of my performance would more than satisfy me. But, as you know, my chief object was to hear something of 'Lohengrin,' and especially the orchestral prelude, which interested me uncommonly. The impression was most powerful, and I had to make every effort not to break down. So much is certain; I shall fully share your predilection for 'Lohengrin;' it is the best thing I have done so far. On the public also it had the same effect. In spite of the 'Tannhäuser' overture preceding them, the pieces from 'Lohengrin' made such an impression that they were unanimously declared to be the best thing." Certainly Wagner had in himself a disciple,

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critic and reporter of whose lack of interest he could hardly complain.

In giving a description of the rehearsals he speaks of studying his choruses with amateurs, and says that "these tame, four part people at last sang as if they had swallowed the devil." But the stimulating effect of this musical activity was of short duration. "'The Rhinegold' is done," he writes, "but I also am done. * * * I have no faith, and only one hope; sleep, sleep so profound, so profound that all sensation of the pain of living ceases. * * * While here I chew a beggar's crust. I hear from Boston that 'Wagner nights' are given there. * * * Something must be done in London; I will even go to America to satisfy my future creditor; this, too, I offer, so that I may finish the music of my 'Nibelung' dramas." * * *

"Dearest Franz, none of my latter years has passed without bringing me at least once to the verge of the resolution to put an end to my life. Everything seems so waste, so lost! Dearest friend, art with me, after all, is a pure stop gap, nothing else, a stop gap in the literal sense of the word. I have to stop the gap by its means in order to live at all. It is therefore with genuine despair that I always resume art; if I am to do this, if I am to dive into the waves of artistic fancy in order to find contentment in a world of imagination, my fancy should at least be buoyed up, my imagination supported. I cannot live like a dog; I cannot sleep on straw and drink bad whiskey. I must be coaxed in one way or another if my mind is

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to accomplish the terribly difficult task of creating a non-existing world.

"Well, when I resumed the plan of the 'Nibelungen' and its actual execution, many things had to co-operate in order to produce in me the necessary, luxurious art mood. I had to adopt a better style of life than before; the success of 'Tannhäuser,' which I had surrendered solely in this hope, was to assist me. I made my domestic arrangements on a new scale; I wasted (Good Lord, wasted!) money on one or the other requirement of luxury. Your visit in the summer, for example, everything, tempted me to a forcibly cheerful deception, or rather desire of deception, as to my circumstances. My income seemed to me an infallible thing. But after my return from Paris my situation again became precarious; the expected orders for my operas, and especially for 'Lohengrin,' did not come in; and as the year approaches its close I realize that I shall want much, very much, money in order to live in my nest a little longer. * * *

"This work is truly the only thing which still ties me to the desire of life. When I think of sacrifices and demand sacrifices, it is for this work; in it alone I discover an object of my life. For its sake I must hold out, and hold out here, where I have got a foothold and have settled down to work. * * * I have in my head 'Tristan and Isolde,' the simplest but most full blooded musical conception; with the 'black flag' which floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die. * * * *Brünnhilde* sleeps; I am, alas, still

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awake. * * * 'Tannhauser' and 'Lohengrin' I have thrown to the winds. I do not want to know any more of them. When I gave them over to theatrical jobbery I cast them out, I condemned them to the task of begging for me, of getting me money, *nothing but money*."

About the only gleam of good spirits in the correspondence about this time is the following: "Do not look out for a copyist. Madame Wesendonck has given me a gold pen of indestructible power which has once more turned me into a calligraphic pedant. The scores will be my most perfect masterpiece of calligraphy. One cannot fly from his destiny. Meyerbeer, years ago, admired nothing so much in my scores as the neat writing. This act of admiration has been my curse; I must write neat scores as long as I live in this world."

In February, 1855, "Tannhäuser" was given in Zurich under Von Bulow's direction. A little before this production Wagner had fully remodeled his "Faust" overture. Several interesting passages in the correspondence relate to this work. Late in January, 1848, Wagner sent the score in its original form to Liszt, writing at the same time:

"As I know of no reason to withhold it from you, except that it does not please me any longer, I send it to you, because I think that in this matter the only important question is whether the overture pleases you. If the latter should be the case dispose of my work; only I should like occasionally to have the manuscript back again."

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Later on he explains to Liszt—who had commented on the absence of any theme typical of *Gretchen* in the work—that his intention had been to write an entire "Faust" symphony, and adds:

"The first movement, that which is ready, was this 'solitary Faust,' longing, despairing, cursing. The 'feminine' floats around him as an object of his longing, but not in its divine reality, and it is just this insufficient image of his longing which he destroys in his despair. The second movement was to introduce *Gretchen*, the woman. I had a theme for her, but it was only a theme. The whole remained unfinished. I wrote my 'Flying Dutchman' instead. This is the whole explanation. If now, for a last remnant of weakness and vanity, I hesitate to abandon this 'Faust' work altogether, I shall certainly have to remodel it, but only as regards instrumental modulation. The theme which you desire I cannot introduce; this would naturally involve an entirely new composition, for which I have no inclination. If I publish it I shall give it its proper title, 'Faust in Solitude' or 'The Solitary Faust,' a tone poem for orchestra. * * * I cannot be angry with this composition, although many detached things in it would not now flow from my pen, especially the somewhat too plentiful brass is no longer in my mind."

In January, 1855, he announced to Liszt that he had remodeled the overture.

"It is an absurd coincident that just at this time I have been taken with a desire to remodel my old 'Faust' overture. I have made an entirely new

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score, have rewritten the instrumentation throughout, have made many changes, and have given more expansion and importance to the middle portion (second motive). I shall give it in a few days at a concert here, under the title of 'A Faust Overture.'"

Not long afterward Wagner forwarded the remodeled overture to Liszt, with this interesting communication:

"Herewith, dearest Franz, you receive my remodeled 'Faust' overture, which will appear very insignificant to you by the side of your 'Faust' symphony. To me the composition is interesting only on account of the time from which it dates; this reconstruction has again endeared it to me, and with regard to the latter, I am childish enough to ask you to compare it very carefully with the first version, because I should like you to take cognizance of the effect of my experience, and of the more refined feeling I have gained. In my opinion new versions of this kind show most distinctly the spirit in which one has learned to work and the coarseness which one has cast off. You will be better pleased with the middle part. I was of course unable to introduce a new motive, because that would have involved a remodeling of almost the whole work; all I was able to do was to develop the sentiment a little more broadly, in the form of a kind of enlarged cadence. *Gretchen*, of course, could not be introduced, only *Faust* himself."

His distressing financial burdens were somewhat lightened by an engagement to conduct the concerts of the London Philharmonic Society. Of his experi-

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ence in this position he says: "A magnificent orchestra as far as the principal members go. Superb tone —the leaders had the finest instruments I ever heard —a strong *esprit de corps*, but no distinct style. The fact is the Philharmonic people, orchestra and audience, consumed more music than they could possibly digest. As a rule an hour's music takes several hours' rehearsal; how can any conductor with a few morning hours at his disposal be supposed to do justice to monster programs such as the directors put before me? Two symphonies, two overtures, a concerto, and two or three vocal pieces at each concert! The directors continually referred me to what they chose to call the Mendelssohn traditions. But I suspect Mendelssohn had simply acquiesced in the traditional ways of the society. One morning when we began to rehearse the 'Leonora' overture I was surprised; everybody appeared dull, slovenly, inaccurate, as though the players were weary and had not slept for a week. Was this to be tolerated from the famous Philharmonic orchestra? I stopped and addressed them in French, saying I knew what they could do and I expected them to do it. Some understood and translated; they were taken aback, but they knew I was right and took it good humoredly. We began again and the rehearsal passed off well. I have every reason to believe the majority of the artists really got to like me before I left London."

Among the compositions which he played in London were the overture of "Tannhäuser" and selections from "Lohengrin." He lived at 31 Milton street,

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Dorset square, and afterward at 22 Portland terrace, Regent's Park, and at the latter place he completed the greater part of the instrumentation of the "Valkyr."

These two passages in letters dated from London speak for themselves: "Curious to me was the confession of some Mendelssohnians—that they had never heard and understood the overture to the 'Hebrides' as well as under my direction."

"Quite recently a Mr. Ellerton, a rich amateur, approached me very cordially. He has heard my operas in Germany, and my portrait has been hanging in his room for two years. He is the first Englishman I have seen who does not care particularly for Mendelssohn. A fine, amiable mind." Wagner's surroundings were, however, uncongenial, and he found in his work but little stimulus to push forward the composition of his "Nibelung" dramas, or to inspire him with any hope of producing them when completed. "What I am creating at present," he writes, "shall never see the light except in perfectly congenial surroundings; on this I will in future concentrate all my strength, my pride, and my resignation. If I die before having produced these works I shall leave them to you, and if you die without having been able to produce them in a dignified manner, you must burn them; let that be settled."

Soon after Wagner's return to Zurich the question of trying his fortunes in America was agitated. The prospect seems, however, to have rather alarmed him, and drew from him one of the most characteristic letters in the correspondence. "America is a terrible

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nightmare. If the New York people should ever make up their minds to offer me a considerable sum, I should be in the most awful dilemma. If I refused I should have to conceal it from all men, for everyone would charge me in my position with recklessness. Ten years ago I might have undertaken such a thing, but to have to walk in such byways now in order to live would be too hard—now, when I am fit only to do, and devote myself to, that which is strictly my business. I should never finish the 'Nibelungen' in my life! Good gracious! such sums as I might earn in America people ought to give me, without asking anything in return beyond what I am actually doing and which is the best that I can do. Besides this, I am much better adapted to spend 60,000 frs. in six months than to 'earn' it. The latter I cannot do at all, for it is not my business to 'earn money,' but it is the business of my admirers to give me as much money as I want, to do my work in a cheerful mood. Well, it is a good thing, and I will take courage from the thought that the Americans will make me no such offer."

Wagner's financial views, while interesting, would hardly strike a business man as sound. It may be true in the abstract that the world owes a livelihood to genius, but as genius is rarely recognized until after its possessor's success or death, the income derived from a genius fund would probably not begin until it was too late to be of service. Moreover, if an attempt were made to raise a genius fund the rich men applied to might reply—and not without some show of truth—

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that it takes as much genius to make a million as it does to make music. Wagner carried his financial theory into various details of life. Thus we find him asking Liszt to apply it in the acquisition of a piano. "You must get me an Erard grand," he writes to Liszt. "Write to the widow and tell her that you visit me three times every year, and that you must absolutely have a better grand piano than the old and lame one in my possession. Tell her a hundred thousand fibs, and make her believe that it is for her a point of honor that an Erard should stand in my house. In brief, do not think but act with the impudence of genius. I must have an Erard. If they will not give me one let them lend me one on a yard long lease."

This was written in July, 1856. A pleasant incident of his life during the same year was a visit from Liszt at St. Gallen, in November, when Wagner conducted the "Eroica" and Liszt his "Orpheus" and "Preludes."

As far as the various interruptions to which he was subjected would allow he had, since he had finished the "Nibelung" dramas in 1853, been at work on the music of these. He says himself, in a letter to the Italian composer Arrigo do Boïto, that the music of the "Rhinegold" occurred to him during a sleepless night at an inn in Spezzia, and that he straightway turned homeward and set to work on the score. By May, 1854, the music of the "Rhinegold" was finished. The following month he began the "Valkyr" and finished all but the instrumentation during the following winter and the full score in 1856. Previous

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to this, in fact already in the autumn of 1854, he had sketched some of the music of "Siegfried," and in the spring of 1857 the full score of the first act and of the greater part of the second act was finished.

Besides the various extracts from the correspondence relating to this work already given there are others equally interesting. Thus he wrote early in 1855: "The score of the first act of the 'Valkyr' will soon be ready; it is wonderfully beautiful. I have done nothing like it or approaching it before;" and in October of the same year: "At times, when I was timid and sobered down, I was chiefly anxious about the great scene of *Wotan*, especially when he discloses the decrees of fate to *Brünnhilde*, and in London I was once on the point of rejecting the whole scene. In order to come to a decision I took up the sketch and recited the scene with proper expression, when fortunately I discovered that my spleen was unjustified, and that if properly represented the scene would have a grand effect even in a purely musical sense."

Ill health also interrupted his work. "My health, too," he writes in January, 1857, "is once more so bad that for ten days after I had finished the sketch for the first act of 'Siegfried' I was literally not able to write a single bar without being driven away from my work by a most alarming headache. Every morning I sit down, stare at the paper, and am glad enough when I get as far as reading Walter Scott. The fact is I have once more overtaxed myself, and how am I to recover my strength? With 'Rhine-

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gold' I got on well enough, considering my circumstances, but the 'Valkyr' caused me much pain. At present my nervous system resembles a pianoforte very much out of tune, and on that instrument I am expected to produce 'Siegfried.' Well, I fancy the strings will break at last, and then there will be an end. We cannot alter it; this is a life fit for a dog."

By May of the same year, however, more agreeable surroundings had given renewed impetus to his artistic nature. "Very soon," he writes, "I hope to resume my long interrupted work, and I shall certainly not leave my charming refuge even for the shortest trip before *Siegfried* has settled everything with *Brünnhilde*. So far I have only finished the first act, but then it is quite ready, and has turned out stronger and more beautiful than anything. I am astonished myself at having achieved this, for at our last meeting I again appeared to myself a terribly blundering musician. Gradually, however, I gained self confidence. With a local prima donna, whom you heard in 'La Juive,' I studied the great final scene of the 'Valkyr.' Kirchner accompanied; I hit the notes famously, and this scene, which gave you so much trouble, realized all my expectations. We performed it three times at my house, and now I am quite satisfied. The fact is that everything in this scene is so subtle, so deep, so subdued, that the most intellectual, the most tender, the most perfect execution in every direction is necessary to make it understood. If this, however, is achieved the impression is be-

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yond a doubt. But of course a thing of this kind is always on the verge of being quite misunderstood, unless all concerned approach it in the most perfect, most elevated, most intelligent mood ; merely to play it through as we tried, in a hurried way, is impossible. I, at least, lose on such occasions instinctively all power and intelligence ; I become perfectly stupid. But now I am quite satisfied, and if you hear the melting and hammering songs of 'Siegfried' you will have a new experience of me. The abominable part of it is that I cannot have a thing of this kind played for my own benefit."

But *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* were not to settle matters between them for a number of years to come. From a passage in the correspondence we have already learned that in 1854 he had become acquainted with the "Tristan" legend. Recognizing the difficulties which he would encounter in securing a performance of the "Nibelung" and, appalled by the prospect of the battle he would be obliged to wage, he had at times been on the verge of suspending work on the music of the dramas and taking up "Tristan" as a more practicable subject. Thus he wrote in 1856 : "My only way would be to give up the 'Nibelungen' and begin such a simple work as 'Tristan' instead, which would have the advantage that I could presumably dispose of it to the theatres at once and receive royalties in return, although, as you know, the music trade would give me nothing for it."

In 1857 he was so disheartened that he abandoned

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the composition of "Siegfried" at the *Waldweben* scene and turned to "Tristan." His idea was that the "Tristan" work would be short and comparatively easy to perform. Genius that he was he had an idea that because it was easy for him to write great music it would be easy for others to interpret it. A very curious, not to say laughable, incident occurred at this time. An agent of the Emperor of Brazil called and asked if Wagner would compose an opera for an Italian troupe at Rio de Janeiro, and would he conduct the work himself, all upon his own terms. Thus "Tristan" was actually composed, or, at least, the composition of it was begun, with a view of its being performed by Italians in Brazil. What a polyglot affair it would have been! An opera on an Irish subject, composed by a German in Switzerland and sung by Italians in Brazil! It is proper to state, however, that the Emperor of Brazil was really interested in Wagner. He subsequently became a patron of the theatre at Bayreuth and witnessed a performance of the "Ring" there.

The following, written in May, 1875, refers to his abandonment of the "Nibelung" dramas for "Tristan," and also to the latter's possible production in Rio: "For so much I may assume that a thoroughly practicable work, such as 'Tristan' is to be, will quickly bring me a good income and keep me afloat for a time. In addition to this I have a curious idea. I am thinking of having a good Italian translation made of this work in order to produce it as an Italian opera at the theatre of Rio Janeiro, which will proba-

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bly give my 'Tannhäuser' first. I mean to dedicate it to the Emperor of Brazil, who will soon receive copies of my last three operas, and all this will, I trust, realize enough to keep me out of harm's way for a time. Whether after that my 'Nibelungen' will appeal to me again I cannot foresee; it depends upon moods over which I have no control. For once I have used violence against myself. Just as I was in the most favorable mood I have torn *Siegfried* from my heart and placed him under lock and key as one buried alive. There I shall keep him, and no one shall see anything of him, as I had to shut him out from myself. Well, perhaps this sleep will do him good; as to his awaking I decide nothing. I had to fight a hard and painful battle before I got to this point. Well, it is settled so far."

The poem of "Tristan" was finished early in 1857, and in the winter of the same year the full score of the first act was ready to be forwarded to the engraver, Wagner having hurried the work, as the Härtels had promised him one-half of the honorarium of 200 louis d'or on receipt of the first act. The second act is dated Venice, March 2, 1859, Wagner temporarily residing there with the permission of the Austrian authorities. The third is dated Lyons, August, 1859.

It is interesting to note in connection with "Tristan" that, while Wagner wrote it because he thought it would be easy to secure its performance, he subsequently found more difficulty in getting it produced than any other of his works. In fact, he could not

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even obtain permission to return to Germany — though whether the Germans were more afraid of Wagner or of "Tristan" we have no means of knowing.

In the summer of 1858 he received a visit from Tausig and gives Liszt a graphic pen picture of this phenomenal young musician's doings:

"When he came into my room, one fine morning, bringing your letter, I shook you cordially by the hand. He is a terrible youth. I am astonished, alternately, by his highly developed intellect and his wild ways. He will become something extraordinary, if he becomes anything at all. When I see him smoking frightfully strong cigars, and drinking no end of tea, while as yet there is not the slighest hope of a beard, I am frightened, like the hen when she sees the young ducklings, which she has hatched by mistake, take to the water. What will become of him I cannot foresee, but whiskey and rum he will not get from me. I should, without hesitation, have taken him into my house, if we had not mutually molested each other by pianoforte playing. So I have found him a room in a little hole close to me, where he is to sleep and work, doing his other daily business at my house. He does, however, no credit to my table, which, in spite of my grass-widowerhood, is fairly well provided. He sits down to table every day stating that he has no appetite at all, which pleases me all the less, because the reason is the cheese and the sweets he has eaten. In this manner he tortures me continually, and devours my biscuits, which my wife

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doles out grudgingly even to me. He hates walking, and yet declares that he would like to come with me when I propose to leave him at home. After the first half hour he lags behind, as if he had walked four hours.

"My childless marriage is thus suddenly blessed with an interesting phenomenon, and I take in, in rapid doses, the quintessence of paternal cares and troubles. All this has done me a great deal of good; it was a splendid diversion, for which, as I said before, I have to thank you. You knew what I wanted. Of course the youth pleases me immensely in other ways, and, although he acts like a naughty boy, he talks like an old man of pronounced character. Whatever subject I broach with him he is sure to follow me with clearness of mind and remarkable receptivity. At the same time it touches and moves me when this boy shows such deep, tender feeling, such large sympathy, that he captivates me irresistibly. As a musician he is enormously gifted, and his furious piano playing makes me tremble. I must always think of you and of the strange influence which you exercise over so many, and often considerably gifted, young men. I cannot but call you happy and genuinely admire your harmonious being and existence."

In September, 1859, he again went to Paris with the somewhat curious hope that he could there find opportunity to produce "Tristan" with German artists, or at least obtain a French performance of "Tannhäuser" or "Lohengrin." Regarding "Tristan," he writes from Paris to Liszt: "The first act of 'Tris-

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tan, which I have brought with me, has aroused me wonderfully. It is a remarkable piece of music. I feel a strong desire to communicate some of it to someone, and I fear I shall be tempted to play some of it to Berlioz one of these days, although my beautiful performance will probably terrify and disgust him. Could I only be with you! That, you know, is the burden of my song." There is an amusing description of a reading of "Lohengrin" for the benefit of Carvalho, director of the Lyric Theatre, with Wagner at the piano. He is described as sitting at the instrument struggling with the finale of the second act, singing, yelling and gesticulating as if demented. Carvalho is represented as going through the ordeal quietly and patiently, and finally bringing the matter to a close with a few polite words. Early in 1860 Wagner gave in Paris three orchestral and choral concerts, which added not a little to his fame and to his debts, and he was obliged to part with a portion of the sum paid by the Schotts for the copyright of the "Ring." Nothing daunted, however, he gave, with similar results, two concerts at the Brussels Opera House. But now a new hope was held out to him. Through the intercession of the Princess Metternich, the Emperor ordered the production of "Tannhäuser" at the Opéra, commanding that the work should be mounted in the most magnificent style, and that Wagner should choose his own singers and have as many rehearsals as he saw fit. Chief among the singers whom he selected was Niemann, for the title rôle.

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There were seventy-three rehearsals at the piano, forty-five choral, twenty-seven without orchestra on the stage, four for scenic changes, and fourteen full rehearsals with orchestra—a hundred and fifty-three in all. The production is said to have cost something like $40,000. He rewrote the opening scene entirely, and, as a sort of a preliminary educational campaign, published a translation of several of his librettos, with a prefatory explanation of his aims and views. Nevertheless he was not sanguine of success. The conductor of the Opéra, whose place Wagner was anxious to fill himself for this occasion, was Dietsche, none other than the man who had set the French version of "The Flying Dutchman" to music. It is easy to understand that he could not have been very kindly disposed toward the author and musician who had produced a successful opera on the same subject, and he probably thought this was a good chance to compass the shipwreck of a person whom he could regard as little more than the *Flying Dutchman* among composers. Nevertheless, the opera probably would have achieved success, had it not been for the opposition of the famous Jockey Club, among them many of the old nobility who had come to look upon the opera as nothing else than a pleasing frame for a grand ballet, so timed that it would begin just about as they came to the opera from their club dinner.

The manager of the Opéra made every effort to induce Wagner to introduce a ballet into the second act of "Tannhäuser," but Wagner's artistic conscience was not elastic. As a result, the members of the

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Jockey Club were determined from the start that the opera should be doomed to failure. In this way they could show not only their displeasure at the omission of the ballet, but also, at the same time, disrespect toward the Emperor, whom they regarded as little more than an upstart. As a failure this performance was probably the greatest success on record. It is actually historical. Nothing that Wagner did could be otherwise than grand, and therefore the failure was on an enormous scale. Three performances were given, of which it is difficult to say whether the performance was on the stage or in the auditorium, for the uproar in the house certainly drowned whatever sounds came from the stage. The members of the Jockey Club and their hirelings armed themselves with shrill whistles, on which they began to blow whenever there was the slightest hint of applause, and the result was that between the efforts of the singers to make themselves heard and of Wagner's friends to applaud, and the shrill whistling from his enemies, there was confusion worse confounded. But Wagner's friendship with Princess Metternich bore good fruit. Through her mediation, it is supposed, he received permission to return to all parts of Germany but Saxony. It was not until March, 1862, thirteen years later, that he was again allowed to enter the kingdom of his birth and first success.

In another way, too, the Paris failure bore good results. It produced a certain loyalty to him in Germany, and when he returned there in 1861 he was received with enthusiasm. His first thought was to

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secure the production of "Tristan," but at Vienna, after fifty-seven rehearsals, it was put on the shelf, and negotiations with other theatres proving fruitless he was obliged to earn a precarious living by giving concerts. Those of his operas which were performed did not yield him sufficient to live on. He tells the story in his own words: "My operas were to be heard right and left; but I could not live on the proceeds. At Dresden 'Tannhäuser' and 'The Flying Dutchman' had grown into favor; yet I was told that I had no claim with regard to them, since they were produced during my Capellmeistership, and a Hofcapellmeister in Saxony is bound to furnish an opera once a year. When the Dresden people wanted 'Tristan' I refused to let them have it unless they agreed to pay for 'Tannhäuser.' Accordingly they thought they could dispense with 'Tristan.' Afterward, when the public insisted upon 'The Mastersingers,' I got the better of them."

May 15, 1861, thirteen years after it was finished and eleven years after its first performance, Wagner heard "Lohengrin" for the first time at Vienna. He was welcomed at Weimar in August by Liszt and a large circle of musicians. As a sort of reaction from his "Tristan" he now began to elaborate the sketch of "The Mastersingers," which he made in 1845, as a humorous sequence to the contest of the minstrels in "Tannhäuser." He had finished the libretto during a temporary sojourn in Paris during the winter of 1861–2. In the latter year the poem was printed for private circulation by the Schotts, of Mayence. Wag-

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ner began to compose the music while residing in Biebrich, on the Rhine, opposite Mayence. On November 1, in the same year, he produced at a benefit concert at Leipsic the overture of "The Mastersingers." Dannreuther says: "The writer, who was present, distinctly remembers the half empty room, the almost complete absence of professional musicians, the wonderful performance and the enthusiastic demand for a repetition, in which the members of the orchestra took part as much as the audience." To this we may add Wagner's own remark: "That curious concert at Leipsic was the first of a long series of such absurd undertakings to which my straitened means led me. At other towns the public at least appeared *en masse* and I could record an artistic success, but it was not until I went to Russia that the pecuniary results were worth mentioning."

In 1863, while working upon "The Mastersingers" at Penzing, near Vienna, he published his "Nibelung" dramas, expressing his hope that through the bounty of one of the German rulers the completion and performance of his "Ring of the Nibelung" would be made possible. But in the spring of 1864, worn out by his struggle with poverty and almost broken in spirit by his contest with public and critics, he actually determined to give up his public career, and eagerly grasped the opportunity to visit a private country seat in Switzerland. Just at this very moment, when despair had settled upon him, the long wished for help came. King Ludwig II. of Bavaria sent a secretary to find Wagner and bid him come to Munich

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and finish his work. Wagner was no longer in Vienna. He had passed through Munich on his way to Zurich, but had happened to make a detour to Stuttgart. Hither the secretary tracked him, and in May the announcement was published that the King of Bavaria had allowed him a pension of $500 a year from his private purse.

After a brief visit in Switzerland, Wagner settled in Munich in 1864, becoming a Bavarian subject. Here he composed the "March of Homage" ("Huldegung's Marsch"), in honor of King Ludwig, for military band, but published as a work for full orchestra, and in the autumn he was officially commissioned to complete the "Ring." The pension was increased and a little house in the suburbs placed at his disposal. "Tristan" was produced at Munich, June 10, 1865, after numerous and exacting rehearsals, under Von Bülow, and with the only tenor whom Wagner considered competent to take the leading part, Ludwig Schnorr v. Carolsfeld, whose wife took the part of *Isolde*. The work was repeated June 13 and 19 and July 1. Schnorr died suddenly at Dresden of pneumonia July 21, 1865. During the last scene after *Tristan's* death the tenor was obliged to lie on the stage exposed to a strong draft, which is supposed to have brought on his fatal illness. "Tristan" was not, in fact could not, be given again until June, 1869, when the Vogels took the leading part.

Owing to the ill will of Franz Lachner and other Munich pedants, but also, it is only fair to state, to the alleged insufficiency of available funds, his

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ideas for a new music school could not be carried out.

At the same time all kinds of combinations, political as well as musical, were formed against Wagner, and in December, 1865, the King requested him to promote their mutual comfort by leaving Munich for a while. Retaining the full confidence and friendship of the King, in spite of all his enemies had done to sever their relations, Wagner again turned to his favorite asylum, Switzerland. After short stays at Vevey and Geneva, he settled at Triebschen, near Luzerne, which may be looked upon as his residence until he removed to Bayreuth, in 1872. At Triebschen, October 20, 1867, twenty-two years after he had made the first sketches of "The Mastersingers," the work was completed, Hans Richter having arrived there in 1866 to copy the score. June 21, 1868, a model performance of the work was given at Munich under the direction of Von Bülow, Richter acting as chorus master and Wagner supervising all the details. Dannreuther speaks of this as the finest performance of any of Wagner's works ever given. While Wagner was at Triebschen he worked steadily at the unfinished portion of the "Ring," completing the instrumentation of the third act of "Siegfried" in 1869 and the introduction and first act of "The Dusk of the Gods" in June, 1870.

August 25, 1870, his first wife having died January 25, 1866, after five years' separation from him, he married the divorced wife of Von Bülow, Cosima Liszt, whose mother was the French authoress who

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wrote under the name of "Daniel Sterne." In 1869 and 1870 the "Rhinegold" and the "Valkyr" were respectively performed at the Court Theatre in Munich. In 1869 he published his admirable essay on orchestral leading, and in 1870 his essay on Beethoven.

Bayreuth having been determined upon as the place where a theatre for the special production of his "Ring" should be built, Wagner settled there in April, 1872. On his sixtieth birthday, May 22, he celebrated the laying of the foundation of the Wagner Theatre there with a model performance of Beethoven's ninth symphony and his own "Emperor March."

The cost of the theatre was originally estimated at 300,000 thalers, and was to be raised upon 1,000 certificates, each entitling the holder to a seat at three performances. When a considerable number of these had been taken up—but the scheme seemed nevertheless to have come to a standstill—the plan of forming Wagner societies, where subscriptions for small amounts could be contributed, was suggested. The idea was adopted with enthusiasm, and it may be said that these societies sprang up nearly all over the civilized world. Under the auspices of a number of these Wagner conducted concerts which helped materially to swell the fund. By November, 1874, "The Dusk of the Gods" received its finishing touches, and rehearsals had already been held at Bayreuth. During the summer of 1875, under Wagner's supervision, Hans Richter held full rehearsals there, and

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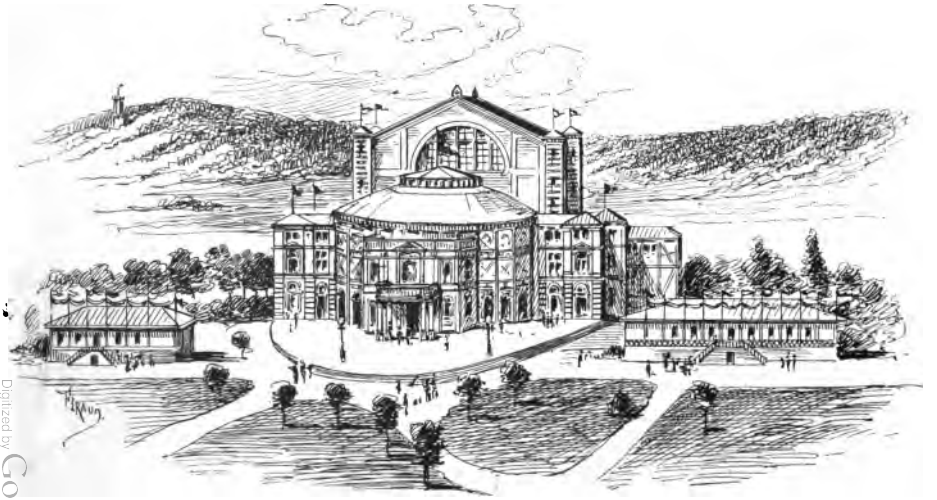

WAGNER THEATRE.

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there was every promise that the master's intentions would be realized.

In November and December, 1875, Wagner superintended rehearsals of "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" at Vienna, which were performed, without cuts, on November 22 and December 15. "Tristan," also under his supervision, was given at Berlin on March 20, 1876.

At last, twenty-eight years after its first conception, on August 13th, 14th, 16th and 17th, again from August 20 to 23 and from August 27 to 30, 1876, "The Ring of the Nibelung" was performed at Bayreuth with the following cast: *Wotan*, Betz; *Loge*, Vogel; *Alberich*, Hill; *Mime*, Schlosser; *Fricka*, Frau Grun; *Donner* and *Gunther*, Gura; *Erda* and *Waltraute*, Frau Jaide; *Siegmund*, Niemann; *Sieglinde*, Frl. Schefsky; *Brünnhilde*, Frau Materna; *Siegfried*, Unger; *Hagen*, Siehr; *Gutrune*, Frl. Wecklerin; *Rheindaughters*, Lili and Marie Lehman and Frl. Lammert. First violin; Wilhelmj; conductor, Hans Richter. From a musical point of view the performance was correct throughout—in many instances of surpassing excellence; sundry shortcomings on the stage were owing more to want of money than to anything else. In spite of the sacrifice readily made by each and all of the artists concerned, there was a heavy deficit—about $37,500—the responsibility for which pressed upon Wagner. He had hoped to be able to repeat the performances in the following summer. This proved impossible, and his efforts to discharge the debts of the theatre failed for the most part.

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The most important of these efforts, the Wagner Festival at the Albert Hall in London, 1877, nearly involved him in further difficulties. These concerts were given at the instance of Wilhelmj with an orchestra of 170 and several of the leading singers from Bayreuth, among them Materna, Hill and Unger. Wagner was able to remit about $3,500 to Bayreuth. After his return a considerable sum was forwarded to him as a testimonial, but he was able to return it with a letter of thanks, he having decided to cover the debt of the Bayreuth performances from royalties to come from performances of the "Ring" at Munich. During his third stay in London, April 30 to June 4, he lived at 12 Orme square, Bayswater. Of his conducting Dannreuther said: "Was Wagner really a great conductor? There can be no doubt that he was, particularly with regard to the works of Weber and Beethoven. His perfect sympathy with these led him to find the true tempi as it were by intuition. He was thoroughly at home in the orchestra, though he had never learned to play upon any orchestral instrument. He had an exquisite sense for beauty of tone, nuances of tempo, precision and proportion of rhythm. His beat was distinct, and his extraordinary power of communicating his enthusiasm to the executants never failed. The writer was present at one of the great occasions when he appeared as conductor—the rehearsals and performance of the ninth symphony at Bayreuth, May 22, 1872—and felt that for spirit and perfection of phrasing it was the finest musical performance within the whole

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range of his musical experience. But at the Albert Hall Wagner did not do himself justice. His strength was already on the wane. The rehearsals fatigued him and he was frequently faint in the evening. His memory played him tricks and his beat was nervous. Still there were moments when his great gifts appeared as of old. Those who witnessed his conducting of the 'Kaisermarsch' at the first rehearsal he attended (May 5) will never forget the superb effect."

The poem of "Parsifal" was published in December, 1877. Wagner had taken it in manuscript to London with him, where he read it for the first time to a circle of friends. He had originally intended that the "Ring" should be performed only at Bayreuth, but for financial reasons he was obliged to allow it to make the rounds of the German theatres, which it did, and is still doing very successfully. January, 1878, the first number of the "Bayreuther Blätter," published by and for the Wagner Verein, under the editorship of Hans von Wolzogen, appeared. To this Wagner himself contributed a number of interesting papers. He was sixty-five years old when he began the music of "Parsifal," completing the sketch of the first act early in the spring of 1878, of the second October 11, beginning the third shortly after Christmas, and completing it in April, 1879. In the winter of this year he was obliged to go to Southern Italy for his health, having suffered from erysipelas. The instrumentation of "Parsifal" was finished at Palermo, January 13, 1882. The introduction had been heard privately at Bayreuth, Christmas, 1878, played by the Meiningen

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Orchestra. "Parsifal" was produced in July, 1882, sixteen performances, extending into August, being given. It has been frequently repeated since then. The Bayreuth performances, since the first production of the "Ring," have been given with good profit.

In the autumn of 1882, Wagner's health being in an unsatisfactory state, though no alarming symptoms had shown themselves, he took up his residence in Venice at the Palazzo Vendramini, on the Grand Canal. He wrote for the "Bayreuther Blätter," and conducted the private performance of his symphony, already referred to, but at dinner in the afternoon of February 13, 1883, he suddenly rose from the table, complained of feeling unwell and fell dead of heart disease. The body was sent from Venice in state to Bayreuth, where it was buried in a vault built by himself in a retired corner of the garden which surrounds his house. After his death it was stated that he had been at work on a Buddhist drama called "The Victor," or "The Penitent," but there is no corroboration of this story. In fact, there is nothing to show that the subject interested him, excepting a short sketch dated Zurich, May 16, 1856.

Wagner was under middle height, quick in movement, speech and gesture and erect of carriage; but, after all, his physical appearance was very disappointing to anyone who knew him simply through his works. He had, however, a tremendous forehead, indicating his immense energy and will power, which, in spite of his morbid, artistic disposition, carried him triumphantly over many distressing periods of

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his life. In the police circular which was issued for his arrest by the Saxon authorities, after the political riot of 1849, he is described as follows: "Wagner is thirty-seven to thirty-eight years old, of middle height, has brown hair, wears glasses, open forehead, eyebrows brown, eyes gray blue, nose and mouth well proportioned, chin round; particulars, in moving and speaking he is hasty; clothing, surtout of dark green buckskin, trousers of black cloth, velvet waistcoat, silk handkerchief, the usual felt hat and boots." He seems to have been a kindly man in his own home, especially after his union to his sympathetic and congenial second wife. One can readily understand the irritated attitude he assumed toward the public, critics and managers.

His great works, which are the delight of thousands, had actually to fight their way, note by note, until they were appreciated. And even now, when his works may be said to have triumphed, dissenting voices are heard. Yet one needs but to approach him in a proper spirit to appreciate his works. I can remember well that at Bayreuth in 1882 the very children in the streets whistled motives from "Parsifal," showing that after all his music cannot be so terribly abstruse. The fact is that Wagner is most easily approached from an entirely unbiased standpoint, and those who have not through previous acquaintance with the works of his predecessors dropped into a certain groove are often those who most readily appreciate him. I once attended a concert with a companion who was but slightly acquainted with classical

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works and had heard nothing of Wagner's. At this concert there was given a symphony by Beethoven, and among the other pieces the introduction and finale of "Tristan." I was quite struck with the ease with which my friend grasped Wagner's intentions. The "Tristan" music seemed perfectly simple and intelligible to him, and it was really a treat to witness his delight on hearing it. But Beethoven puzzled him as much as Wagner would puzzle a champion of conservative form in music. Beethoven seemed to him constrained and artificial, Wagner natural and free in his methods. I have heard of others who have had a similar experience. Wagner in private life is described as a thorough gentleman, yet unconventional, with an artist's fondness for artistic and even luxurious surroundings. There is authority for stating distinctly that the reports in the German newspapers regarding his lavish self indulgence were fabrications. One of these accounts stated that he had a hundred dressing gowns, all of rich material and of different colors, of the most delicate variety. Wagner, on hearing this report, said, laughingly, that of these hundred dressing gowns he had all but ninety-nine.

The discourtesy, dishonesty and virulence to which Wagner was subjected in Germany were great. Not only his works but his private character was violently assailed. It is a great pity that he did not have the disposition to let these things pass by unnoticed. But it must be remembered that these attacks were not only insults to him personally—they were actual hindrances in his artistic and in his worldly career.

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They prevented the production of his works, and thus kept him in a constant state of impoverished distress, depriving him for many years of the necessary leisure to complete the great works he had in his mind, simply because his poverty compelled him to do all kinds of musical drudgery in order to eke out a livelihood. How many more great works Wagner would have given us it is difficult to say, nor is it perhaps a very gracious task to speculate upon this matter, when we consider how rich our inheritance from him is. From "Rienzi" to "Parsifal" is a steady development. His powers were ever on the increase. The "Ring" is not, as some have said, a greater work than "Parsifal." The latter does not show any falling off in powers. If the themes heard in it are not on the same grand, titanic scale as those of the "Ring," it is because the subject called for an entirely different style of treatment.

There is nothing in "Parsifal" to show that he could not, had he but wanted to, have written another "Ring," whereas there is much in it of a different but in some respects superior kind of beauty. He has certainly in "Parsifal" succeeded in giving the most exquisite expressions to the deepest religious feeling —for *Parsifal* is really an allegorical personation of Christ—and if we consider religious feeling the most exalted of all emotions, we must agree that Wagner has in "Parsifal" struck finer chords than in any other of his works. He was a man of wide literary culture. He, as we remember, was familiar with Shakespeare from his youth. To hear him read or act a scene

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from Shakespeare was said to be a delight never to be forgotten, and when in particularly good spirits he would take up a comic scene and render it with the exuberant merriment of a child. Scott and Carlyle were also well represented in his library. He had Sanscrit, Greek and Roman classics, Italian writers from Dante to Leopardi, Spanish, English and French dramatists and philosophic writings from Plato to Schopenhauer. He also possessed a remarkably complete collection of French and German mediæval stories and Norse legends, together with a vast number of philological comments thereon. History and fiction were also well represented.

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BAYREUTH ECHOES.

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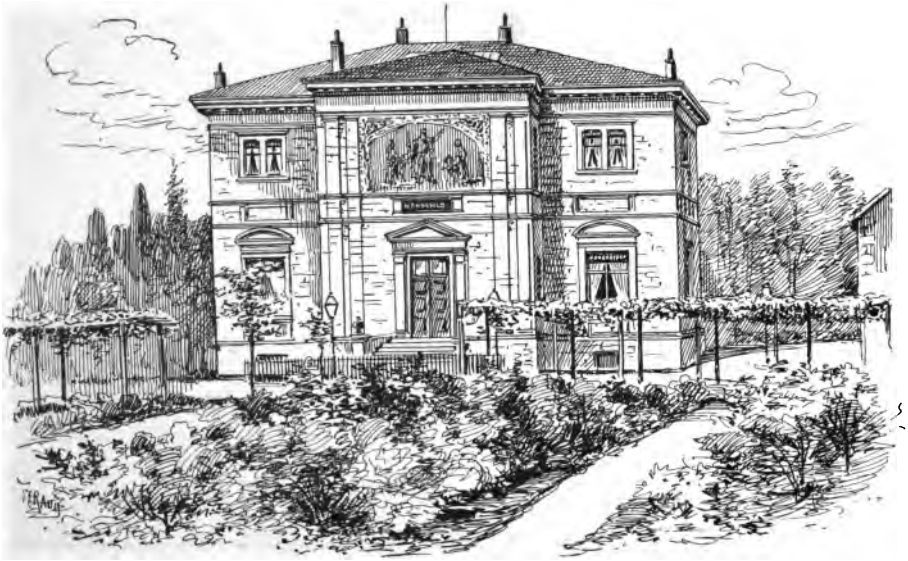

WAHNFRIED.

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Bayreuth Echoes.*

ONE of the greatest obstacles in the way of attending a performance at Bayreuth is the difficulty of getting to Bayreuth at all. It requires considerable ingenuity, and whoever has discovered the route there may be sure that he knows more than most of the German railroad officials. Of course, I didn't expect that the sleepy Belgians in Ostend would be able to direct me, but I did think that the officials in Aix la Chapelle, or in a railroad centre like Cologne, would know the way. It was not, however, until I had reached Mainz—after traveling from 3:50 A. M. till 4:28 P. M.—that I could obtain fairly detailed directions. And yet placards announcing the "Parsifal" performances were hanging up in the depots all along the route!

I traveled on the lightning express from Cologne to Mainz. This lightning express goes at the tremendous rate of twenty miles an hour, stops only about fifteen times and then only long enough for all the

* In 1882 the author was the New York *World's* correspondent at the production of "Parsifal" at Bayreuth.

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conductors—it takes half a dozen conductors to run this train—and passengers to walk leisurely to a neighboring restaurant, drink a glass of beer and get comfortably into their coupés again. So I calculated that it takes the average German five hours and fifteen refreshments to get from Cologne to Mainz. An elderly gentleman in the same coupé with me, who had heard me inquiring the way to Bayreuth at Cologne, kindly consulted his German A B C railroad guide book for about two hours, and then informed me that as far as he could make out I had better go from Mainz over Darmstadt, Aschaffenburg and Würzburg to Bamberg instead of over Frankfort. Bamberg, he said, was in the direction of Bayreuth. He then tried to find out in his German A B C guide book how to get from Bamberg to Bayreuth, but as we were only an hour and a half from Mainz he didn't have time. He also informed me that our train made very close connection at Mainz for the Darmstadt train. "But," he added, "if you want to make inquiries at the ticket office as to the best way of getting to Bayreuth simply explain matters to the Oberstationsvorsteher" (which is a German linguistic short cut for station master) "and he will hold the train for you."

Fortunately a six years' previous residence in Germany had taught me that if I called this station master by his full title and pronounced each of the eight syllables in Oberstationsvorsteher distinctly he would hold the train at least two minutes for each syllable. And sure enough he did hold the train long enough for me to make my inquiries leisurely. So, sixteen

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minutes behind time, the lightning express crawled out of Mainz and brought me to Bamberg at midnight. Here I had to wait until 4 A. M. for a train to Bayreuth, arriving there at 8 A. M.

The readiness of almost every foreign railroad official or servant in any capacity to prey upon strangers was strongly impressed upon me during this trip. I don't understand how a foreigner who can't speak the language gets home with any money at all in his pocket. These officials and menials will try to exchange your American or English money at exorbitant rates; if they find you are not *au fait* in the currency of the country they will give you wrong change; they will overcharge everything. Let a foreigner enter a hotel and the whole house, from the proprietor down to the boots, makes a dead set at him and tries to cheat him out of as much as possible. You think the Portier very polite when he bows very low to you as he hands you your letters. You think that the waiter's cordial good morning comes straight from the heart, and you are touched by the simple cordiality you see around you. But you are mistaken. The hope of a few pence will induce these people to play the hypocrite for a month. They are only acting. They smile and bow and scrape only because they hope that when you go away you will drop a *pourboire* into their hand.

When I arrived in Bayreuth I found the town in a state of confusion. One would suppose that the experience in 1872, when the foundation stone of the Wagner Theatre was laid, and in 1876, when the

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"Nibelungen Ring" was produced, would have taught those worthy burghers to be prepared to accommodate strangers. But no—they had been awakened from a long sleep in 1872 and then had gone to sleep again until 1876. Then at least they might have stayed awake till 1882. But the strangers well plucked and out of the town, and the inhabitants were sound asleep again. I get to the hotel and find the proprietor cursing the Portier, the Portier cursing the head waiter, the head waiter cursing the waiter, and the waiter cursing the boots, who revenged himself by kicking a cat. Everyone about the house—except the cat—had lost his head.

I breakfasted with a Russian who had come on the same train with me. He had spent the last ten years hunting after Wagner operas. When he had heard of a Wagner opera being given somewhere he had taken the first train for that place. In this way he had managed to hear Wagner music about every other night. He had just come from the thirty Wagner performances in London and had tickets for the sixteen "Parsifal" performances. He told me very seriously that when he first saw the Alps he fell on his knees and wept; also that he had been similarly affected only once before in his lfe—as he passed the Acropolis of Athens.

The night I arrived I had the unexpected pleasure of seeing a comedy. It was a genuine German comedy, too. Its subject matter was the efforts of the Bayreuth fire brigade to put out a fire. I was awakened from a sound sleep by the loud beating of

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a drum under my windows. I could hear drums beating in various parts of the city, the church bells were ringing, there was the heavy tramp of soldiers through the streets, people rushing about and shouting fire—in fact, every indication of a fire, except the noise of fire engines. A house a little way down the street was burning. A crowd had gathered there. I found the infantry guarding a patch of beans, the cavalry stationed about the potato patch with flashing sabres, and the artillery drawn up around a pear tree. The flames were crackling merrily among the beams. The house might burn down, but the warriors of the Vaterland were prepared to defend those beans, those potatoes and that pear tree with the last drop of their blood. At last, around the corner appeared six big firemen carrying a small ladder, and after them six small firemen carry a big ladder. They wore green suits and brass helmets. When they had managed to place the big ladder against the front of the house they ran away again.

After a while we heard a rattling as though a dog with a tin can tied to his tail were running through the next street. The twelve firemen again turned the corner, drawing after them what looked like a tin box on wheels. It was the fire engine—an open tin box with a hand pump. A hose was attached. A fireman mounted the ladder. Another fireman carried the hose up to him. Meanwhile women with large wooden panniers strapped to their backs brought water from the neighboring fountain and emptied it into the engine. Finally everything was ready and the pumping

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began. Several large streams of water came from holes in the hose and wet the bystanders. A small stream came from the nozzle. The fire was such a trifle that they really managed to get it pretty well under control. The next day the City Council voted a resolution of thanks and a compensation of 12½ cents to each of the women who carried the water from the fountain to the engine. During the "Parsifal" performances the firemen were distributed through the theatre. This seemed to me unnecessary—the building could have burned down without their assistance.

Bayreuth is a picturesque old town, containing a number of fine old buildings, relics of bygone days, when the Margraves housed there in splendor, the old theatre with its gorgeous Rococo decorations, and the palace from whose frieze the carved heads of the old rulers gaze down in wonderment on the strange faces passing to and fro. On the bosky hills around the city are the Lustschloss Fantasie, the Erimitage, a charming little garden palace, and the Rollwenzelei, where Jean Paul wrote novels. There are other memorials of this author, but now it is Wagner's name which draws pilgrims from all climes. The unsightly Wagner theatre, which looks more like a factory than a temple of art, is the first thing the traveler sees on approaching Bayreuth. Nearby is a large insane asylum, where they have cells and strait jackets reserved for the anti-Wagnerians. Farther on is a jail with a lock-up for small boys who are caught whistling anything but

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"Leitmotifen." The town is Wagnerized. From the stationers' and book shop windows Wagner looks out in marble, plaster and terra cotta. His photographs and those of his artists are hawked about in the streets. Wagner cravats are to be had of all haberdashers. The happy wearer simply pulls a string and the Meister's visage pops out from under a lapel. The Wagnerian can sport a "Parsifal" hat and the Wagnerianerinnen cover their *üppige schultern* with "Nibelungen" shawls. All can drink the Meister's health in sparkling Rhinegold or Klingsor's Zaubertrank. The critic can write his review with a "Siegfried" pen.

But then this Wagner cult is perfectly natural. Wagner has given this sleepy old town a world wide fame. The Banquier finds himself honoring letters of credit on English, Russian, French and American houses. The waiter at the Sonne is scratching his head to make out "was diese Amerikaner meinen wann sie pork and beans bestellen," and an English speaking operator has been added to the telegraphic force. The people feel as though in the Wagnerian era the town would again rise to the importance it boasted during the good old days of the Margraves. Surely comparatively few Americans knew of Bayreuth before Wagner took up his abode there, built a theatre and produced the "Nibelungen Ring." Now it is more spoken of, among musical Americans at least, than Berlin, Vienna, London or Paris. Before Wagner came it was what the Germans call "ein Bauernnest;" now it is the musical centre of Germany.

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Wagner doubtless selected Bayreuth from among those towns which were eager to have his theatre located within their bounds because of its somewhat secluded character. Here he could count upon a reverential spirit, with absolutely no other interest to divert it from its devotion to the Wagner cult. He himself admirably sums up the history of the place. "If," he says, "I made in 'The Mastersingers' my *Hans Sachs* eulogize Nuremburgh as lying in the centre of Germany, I thought that the same might be said still more justly of Bayreuth. The immense Hercynian forest, into which the Romans never penetrated, once extended hither. The name Frankenwald still remains, showing that the whole region was once a forest, the gradual clearing away of which is indicated in sundry local names, or made up in part of the syllables 'reuth' (*reuten*, to make a clearing). Of the name Bayreuth two different interpretations are given. According to one account, in early times the land hereabout was given to the Bavarian dukes and the Frankish king, and here the Bavarians cleared away the forest and made a home for themselves. This interpretation of the word flatters a certain historic sense of justice, in that the land, after frequent changes of owners, at last reverts to those to whom it owes a portion of its culture."

Another and more sceptical explanation would have it that "Bayreuth" is simply the name of a hamlet built up "beim Reuth" (in the clearing). However this may be, the "reuth" remains, indicating a place won from the forest, and made productive; and here

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we are reminded of the "Rütli" of old Switzerland, whence the word derives a still more pleasing and more elevated significance. The land became the Frankish frontier of the German empire against the fanatical Czechs, whose more peaceable Slavic brethren had previously settled there, and so far advanced in civilization that to this day many of the names of places bear both the Slavic and the German stamp. Here first did Slavs become Germans without having to renounce their own peculiar characters; and they peacefully share in the fortunes of the common population. This speaks well for the peculiarities of the German mind. After a long continued rule over this frontier, the Burgraves of Nuremburgh made their way into the marches of Brandenburg, where they were destined to found the kingdom of Prussia, and finally the empire of Germany. Though the Romans never penetrated hither, still Bayreuth was not uninfluenced by Roman civilization. In ecclesiastical affairs it broke boldly away from Rome. The old city, often reduced to ashes, adopted the French taste under princes with a liking for embellishment; an Italian erected, in the shape of a grand opera house, one of the most famous monuments of the Rococo style. Here flourished ballet, opera, comedy. But the Burgomaster of Bayreuth 'affected' (as her ladyship expressed it)—'affected to pronounce his speech of welcome to the sister of Frederick the Great in pure German.'"

"Wahnfried," Wagner's house, and the grounds in which it stands occupy about 4,500 square feet. A roadway for wagons leads straight from the gate to

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the front door. Those on foot approach the house through two beautiful arbors. Above the door is the following inscription :

Hier wo mein wähnen Friedens fand—	WAHNFRIED.	Sei dieses haus von mir benannt.

expressive of the repose Wagner found here after his hopes were realized.

Under this inscription is the sgraffito drawing by Robert Krausse. This is an allegorical drawing. Wotan, the principal figure, represents German mythology. To the right is Greek tragedy, to the left music, and to these Siegfried looks up, the embodiment of the "Art Work of the Future." As a stranger approached the house at the time the author was at Bayreuth three dogs sprang out of a roomy kennel and began a furious barking. These were the Nibelungen dogs—Wotan and his wives, Freia and Fricka. The house was built according to Wagner's own suggestions. In the basement are the kitchen and servants' rooms; in the cellar a furnace (this mode of heating is rather uncommon in Germany) and a capital wine cellar. I usually dined at the restaurant where Wagner bought his wines, and I soon came to the conclusion that he knew as much about wines as he did about music. The Leitmotif in his wine cellar was a fine array of Johannisberger, but as he was a universal genius he had not confined himself to German vineyards.

On the ground floor you enter a roomy hall which

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runs clear up to the roof and receives its light from above. There are marble statues of the heroes of Wagner's operas, by Zumbusch, and two busts of the Meister by Dr. Kietz, of Dresden. The frieze is decorated with frescoes representing scenes from "Der Ring des Nibelungen." A room of about 1,500 feet square opens into this hall. The walls are for the most covered with little bric-à-brac shelves and bookcases. The latter contain a great amount of curious literature, mostly folk lore relating to the subjects on which the Meister has based the plots of his music dramas. There is also a piano in one corner. The room receives light from a large bay window. In one side of this bay window is a large tropical plant; in the other the plain table at which Wagner sat at work. There was usually nothing on the table except a few sheets of music paper and an inkstand, and on the inkstand a penholder, which looked as though the Meister had been chewing at it. The back door of this room leads into the garden.

In this room, the hall and the large dining room Frau Cosima usually received her guests. When Liszt stood beside her it was easy to see the resemblance between them. Liszt had on his face a number of huge warts, for each of which his female adorers had some pet name. These warts made his fine, strong head all the stronger looking, and he can hardly be blamed for the fact that a lot of silly women made fools of themselves over him. The same is true of Wagner, upon whom, in 1882, I saw a French authoress and other women attempting to fawn in the

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most open and disgusting manner. The company at the Wahnfried receptions in 1882 consisted chiefly of the artists and their friends, some German musicians and members of the Patronatsverein. At one reception there were some Englishmen present who had opera glasses through which, as they stood in the middle of the room, they examined the ceiling and walls and the company as well. Some of the pretty *Blumenmädchen* (the alluring flower girls in the second act of "Parsifal") came in, and Liszt, whose eye for female beauty seemed undimmed, at once began to chaff them and joke with them. Wagner suddenly rushed in from a side door, threw his arms around Scaria, the basso, exclaiming: "This is for your splendid performance yesterday," kissed him and rushed out of the room again. Nearly an hour afterward he appeared again and was walking toward Liszt, who was in the middle of the room, when one of the Englishmen who had been looking through an opera glass spied him and at once made for him. "Herr Wagner," he said, in broken German, as he got near to him, "I had such a good time listening to 'Parsifal.'

Hardly had Wagner heard the words "had a good time," before he turned and darted from the room, shrieking, as he threw up his hands in dismay: "If you want to have a good time go and hear something of Offenbach's!"

That was the last seen that night of the Meister and—the Englishman.

In the evenings when there was no reception at Wahnfried there were always some of the principal

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singers to be found in the wine room of the Hotel Sonne. One night Materna would dress the salad and Scaria brew the punch, and the next night the rôles would be reversed. The prettiest among the *Blumenmädchen* looked after the trimmings. One evening Materna told us that Wagner had been in particularly good spirits at the theatre rehearsal that afternoon. While he was singing a certain phrase for her, to show her some particular nuance, his voice broke. Turning to Liszt and bowing apologetically he said: "Excuse me, sir; I have not practiced my solfeggios this morning." This led Scaria to tell us an anecdote which he had from Wagner himself. When Wagner was conductor of the London Philharmonic concerts he rehearsed a Beethoven symphony from memory. As the sainted Mendelssohn, who had dined with the Queen and the Prince Consort, had always led from a score, the directors thought there must be something radically wrong in Wagner's method of procedure and remonstrated with him so strongly that he promised to conduct from the score at the concert. Accordingly that evening he had a music book on his desk and turned the leaves from time to time as he conducted the symphony. After the concert one of the directors came up to him and said: "Now, Herr Wagner, you must admit that the symphony went much better with the score than without it." Wagner calmly pointed to the score he had used. It was that of Rossini's "Barber of Seville."

This seems to be the proper point at which to introduce some of Wagner's characteristic sayings

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which have been reported by Von Wolzogen, Dannreuther and others. Speaking of a perfect balance between the means employed and the effects produced he said: "Mozart's music and Mozart's orchestra are a perfect match; an equally perfect balance exists between Palestrina's choir and Palestrina's counterpoint; and I find a similar correspondence between Chopin's piano and some of his etudes and preludes. I do not care for the 'ladies' Chopin,' there is too much of the Parisian salon in that. But he has given us many things that are above the salon."

Few musical people—in this country at least—will agree with his opinion of Schumann, though Wagner on Schumann is less intolerant than Schumann on Wagner. "Schumann's peculiar treatment of the pianoforte," he said, "grates on my ear; there is too much blur; you cannot produce his pieces unless it be with obligato pedal. What a relief to hear a sonata of Beethoven's! In early days I thought more would come of Schumann. His *Zeitschrift* was brilliant and his pianoforte works showed great originality. There was much ferment, but also much real power, and many bits are quite unique and perfect. I think highly, too, of many of his songs, though they are not quite as great as Schubert's. He took pains with his declamation—no small merit a generation ago. Later on I saw a good deal of him at Dresden, but then already his head was tired, his powers on the wane. He consulted me about the text to 'Genoveva,' which he was arranging from Tieck's and Hebbel's plays; yet he would not take my advice—he seemed to fear some trick."

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Wagner was much censured for what were considered his bitter attacks upon Mendelssohn, yet he expressed unreserved admiration for several of Mendelssohn's compositions. He was especially fond of the "Hebrides" overture, calls Mendelssohn a musical landscape painter of the first order and speaks of this overture as his masterpiece. "Wonderful imagination and delicate feeling are here presented with consummate art," he said. "Note the extraordinary beauty of the passage where the oboe rises above the other instruments with a plaintive wail like sea winds over the seas! 'Calm at Sea and Happy Voyage' also is beautiful, and I am very fond of the first movement of the Scotch symphony. No one can blame a composer for using national melodies when he treats them so artistically as Mendelssohn has done in the scherzo of this symphony. His second themes, his slow movements generally, where the human element comes in, are weaker. As regards the overture to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' it must be taken into account that he wrote it at seventeen, and how finished the form is already!"

Schubert's songs he rated, as noted before, very high; but this admiration did not extend to Schubert's other works. Nevertheless his opinion will be interesting, even to Schubert's most ardent admirers, among whom the author is happy to count himself.

"Schubert," said Wagner, "has produced model songs, but that is no reason for us to accept his pianoforte sonatas or his ensemble pieces as really solid work, not more than we need accept Weber's songs,

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his pianoforte quartet, or the trio with a flute, because of his wonderful operas. Schumann's enthusiasm for Schubert's trios and the like was a mystery to Mendelssohn. I remember Mendelssohn speaking to me of the note of Viennese *bonhomie* (*bürgerlieche Behabligkeit*) which runs through some things of Schubert's. Curiously enough, Liszt still likes to play Schubert. I cannot account for it; that 'Divertissement à la Hongroise' verges on triviality, no matter how it is played."

Speaking of *pièces d'occasion* and with special reference to the "Centennial March," he said: "I am not a learned musician; I never had occasion to pursue antiquarian researches, and periods of transition did not interest me much. I went straight from Palestrina to Bach, from Bach to Gluck and Mozart—or, if you choose, along the same path backward. It suited me personally to rest content with the acquaintance of the principal men, the heroes and their main works. For aught I know this may have had its drawbacks; anyway, my mind has never been stuffed with 'music in general.' Being no learned person I have not been able to write to order. Unless the subject absorbs me completely I cannot produce twenty bars worth listening to."

To those young musicians who think they follow Wagner by devising eccentric instrumental effects the following remark will be of value:

"In instrumental music I am a *réactionnaire*, a conservative. I dislike everything that requires a verbal explanation beyond the actual sounds. For instance,

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the middle of Berlioz's touching 'Scène d'Amour,' in his 'Romeo and Juliet,' is meant by him to reproduce in musical phrases the lines about the lark and the nightingale in Shakespeare's balcony scene, but it does nothing of the sort; it is not intelligible as music. Berlioz added to, altered and spoiled his work. This so-called 'Symphonie Dramatique' of Berlioz as it now stands is neither fish nor flesh; strictly speaking it is no symphony at all. There is no unity of matter, no unity of style. The choral recitatives, the songs and other vocal pieces have little to do with the instrumental movements. The operatic finale, *Père Laurent* especially, is a failure. Yet there are beautiful things right and left. The 'Convoi Funébre' is very touching and a masterly piece. So, by the way, is the Offertoire of the requiem. The opening theme of the 'Scène d'Amour' is heavenly; the garden scene and the fête at the Capulets' enormously clever; indeed, Berlioz was diabolically clever (*verflucht pfiffig*). I made a minute study of his instrumentation as early as 1840 at Paris, and have often taken up his scores since. I profited greatly, both as regards what to do and what to leave undone."

Regarding the efforts made to introduce his music into France, Wagner said: "Pasdeloup made every effort to acclimatize me in France and I thank him. But no one can become acquainted with me through concerts. I must be introduced at the theatre, for, to appear properly, I need not only singers but scenic effects and the entire dramatic apparatus. In my

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compositions all the parts are closely related, one conditioned by the others; and if one of these is omitted the unity of my work suffers. My works, however, will never receive recognition in your country. My music is too German. I strive, with all the power given me, to be the child of my fatherland. It is also dangerous to listen to my musical declamation without the use of a text, for they are reciprocal. Why have you not in Paris an international stage, where celebrated foreign compositions can be given in the original language? Composers would then be happy to appear before a Parisian public, which is the most intelligent in the world. I know my music is not played in Paris for other deplorably absurd reasons. Of these, however, I will no longer speak; they belong to the past. I am supposed to be bitterly disposed toward the French. And why? Because they hissed my 'Tannhäuser?' Is it certain that it was heard correctly? Auber could answer for me; into his ear I whispered my woes. The moment for earnest music had not then arrived. As regards the journalists, I cannot complain of them all. I did not visit them as did Meyerbeer; yet Baudelaire, Champfleury and Schuré have written the best articles on my works that have appeared. I am not as dissatisfied with Paris as report says."

The best view I had of Wagner was at a dinner given by him to his artists and a few friends at the restaurant near the Wagner Theatre. At one end of this restaurant the floor was sunk considerably and steps led down to it. In this space was the table for

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the composer and his guests. A dinner was served on the upper portion to which, on payment, anyone was admitted, so that whoever chose to pay for the dinner could also have the pleasure of watching the proceedings in the pit. Wagner and his guests dined to a full house. The composer was the last to appear on the scene, entering hastily. This was the first time I saw him and I must own I was greatly disappointed in his looks. He was in spick and span clothes—something unpardonable in a genius. A light overcoat, gray trousers and lavender gloves were the most conspicuous details of his costume. He was undersized and walked with short, quick steps, Altogether he looked like a little dandy. But when he took off his hat and revealed his grand forehead his genius was impressively apparent. Looking up from the elect to where the spectators sat he exclaimed, somewhat contemptuously: "Da is ja auch das Publikum" (There are also the lookers on). Wagner treated his audiences, and even admirers who were nearer to him, pretty much as a father would his bad children.

After dinner there were speeches. Some local dignitaries made long and uninteresting remarks. Wagner's address was brief, but snappy and to the point. In its course he said some nice things about father-in-law Liszt. Wagner sat between his wife and Liszt, and concluded with a fine tribute to his artists. "I am," he said, "under deep obligations to all who have contributed to the fund for the 'Parsifal' performances, but I am under deeper obligations to my

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artists; for, after all, art is not created by money but by artists."

I saw Wagner again after the first and last acts of "Parsifal." After the curtains closed on the first act the audience broke out into loud applause and called for Wagner. The enthusiasm not subsiding, he came out and scolded "das Publikum" roundly, saying that this was not a theatrical performance and that they ought to be ashamed of themselves for thinking of recalls before the end of the last act. "Das Publikum" forthwith meekly subsided, and during the rest of the performance was decorously *weihevoll* and *verklärt.* After the last act, however, the artists and Wagner were called before the curtain, the composer thanking his artists much in the same language which he had employed at the dinner. "Das Publikum," however, which had contributed the shekels was not thanked. Aside from the performances at Bayreuth, there was something about the Wagner cult as practiced there which struck a cool headed American newspaper man—even if he was a Wagnerite—as very funny.

The performance, however, left an indelible impression upon me, and by it as a standard I have measured all Wagnerian representations which I have heard since then. None of them has come up to that production of "Parsifal;" for not only the work itself but the performance also bore the stamp of Wagner's genius. He personally superintended the arduous rehearsals, gave the most minute directions regarding the *mise en scène* and instructed the

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artists in the execution of the music and in the stage business.

Soon after the curtain had risen on this production of "Parsifal," my attention was suddenly attracted by a peculiar excrescence on one of the rocks in the left foreground of the stage. Gradually, as I looked, the excrescence assumed the shape of a human head, and some minutes afterward I was able to distinguish the face of Wagner himself outlined against the piece of rock scenery. At first I supposed he had ventured out too far from behind the scenes in order to observe the effect of his last music drama upon the audience. But this supposition was dispelled by the circumstance that he rarely looked toward the auditorium. He seemed rather to be watching the singers on the stage. The face remained in view until the panoramic change of scene from the forest to the Castle of the Grail. It struck me as a curious circumstance that although I frequently looked at the face during the progress of the scene, it did not grow into any bolder relief against the rock, but remained almost as flat as though it had been painted into the scenery.

Afterward I asked a number of friends in the audience if they had seen what I had. They had not, nor had others of whom they made inquiries. I was beginning to think that the appearance of Wagner's face against the rock was a freak of mirage, resulting perhaps from the positions of some of the lights behind the scenes, when I mentioned the matter to one of the principal singers in the cast. He mani-

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fested surprise, not at what I had discovered, but at my having discovered it. He then told me that weeks before the production of "Parsifal" Wagner had chalked little crosses on the stage to indicate the exact spots where he wanted the singers to stand, and had also drawn lines to show the direction in which they were to move from one point to another, and had himself drilled them in every movement. At the dress rehearsals and during the performance he had watched them, except during the first scene of the first act, from behind the scenes, in order to observe whether or not they closely followed his directions.

Discovering that in the scene referred to he could not command a full view of the stage from any point at which he was entirely hidden from the audience, he had selected the place where I had noticed him, because there, when the stage was lighted, his complexion and the coloring of the scenery almost blended, and he considered himself safe from detection. I was much impressed at this incident. For it furnished a clue to the vast amount of labor which, unknown to the public, preceded the production of "Parsifal." If one detail in the performance had necessitated so much thought, drilling and watchfulness, how much of these, beyond the most liberal estimate of the public, must have been developed during the long period of preparation!

One of the most impressive incidents of the production was the reverential spirit in which the audience followed the work. The cult which had so

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many ridiculous features outside the walls of the Wagner Theatre was an element of beauty within them. The performance in consequence progressed without the slightest disturbance from the auditorium except the occasional hissing of extreme Wagnerites at some fancied sacrilege, such as the rustling of a programme. Just before the beginning of the *Vorspiel* the doors were closed and no one was admitted until the end of the first act. The rule was enforced with equal rigor during the second and third acts. Therefore there was no disturbance from late comers. They paid the penalty of their lack of punctuality by being obliged to wait until the act upon which the doors had closed was over. The lights in the auditorium were lowered and, as the orchestra was sunk out of sight, there was no long haired Capellmeister to draw attention from the performance to his own gymnastics, and no bowing and blowing of orchestral players to watch. The *Vorspiel* certainly produced a most *spirituel* effect, its ethereal harmonies rising like perfume from an "unseen censer;" and when the curtains parted the stage monopolized the attention of all.

The scene disclosed by the parting of the curtain was calculated to heighten the *spirituel* effect produced by the *Vorspiel.* It was an exquisite forest vista awakening to the first delicate touches of the morning sun. One could peer between gray columns into deep recesses shaded by soft green arches. The ground was uneven, little mounds and hollows and a rocky ascent in the background adding to the

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natural appearance of the scenery. The light effect was most beautiful, very soft, like that of approaching day, and hardly casting a shadow. The scene was not the ordinary "set," but was largely composed of separate trees, with branches and leaves cut out so as to give most effectively the idea of a real forest. Between these branches and leaves a network was hung, and this with the soft light gave a hazy atmospheric effect. This device is now frequently applied, and can be witnessed at almost any performance at the Metropolitan Opera House, but at the time it was quite new, having been introduced, I believe, in 1876, at the Bayreuth Theatre.

Added to this atmospheric effect was a gentle swaying of the leaves and branches, as if a gentle breeze was passing through the forest. Grouped under a huge tree in the foreground were *Gurnemanz* and two pages, the one a vigorous old knight, the other two exceedingly graceful and pretty youths. At the signal from the castle the knight slowly awakened and called to the pages, who yawned and finally opened their eyes. This was all done in a very natural manner, and in fact all the effects produced during this performance seemed to have the one aim in view—to simulate nature. A word is due these pages and all others who took the parts of pages in this scene and in the processions and of flower girls in the second act. They were exceedingly pretty and graceful, and had been selected by Wagner, who was a connoisseur in such matters, for these very attributes.

It is, of course, impossible to analyze every fea-

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ture of the performance. This could not be done without at the same time analyzing the work itself, and as an analysis of "Parsifal" is given in Volume II. of this work, I can here only reproduce the most striking features of the representation. As the morning brightened the light gradually increased in power. The first decided break upon the calm was the wild entrance of *Kundry* in her savage garb, girdled with a snake's skin, her black hair streaming in the wind and her eyes gleaming with a fierce fire. As she lay upon the ground looking at the knight and pages she resembled more some savage animal of the forest than a woman. The scene became more animated when *Amfortas* was borne in upon his litter, followed by his knights and pages. They were clad in blue and red, colors which contrasted very effectively with the soft hues of the forest. Excellent, too, was the gradual disappearance of the procession, as the king was borne down the depression toward the lake.

Another striking dramatic effect was produced when *Gurnemanz's* narrative of the misfortunes which had fallen upon the knighthood was interrupted by sudden cries from the lake, and the wounded swan fluttered upon the scene and fell at the old knight's feet, *Parsifal* being immediately afterward led in a captive. When *Gurnemanz* uttered his noble reproof, at the same time gently holding up the swan to *Parsifal's* gaze, the bird gently lifted its neck and wings in the last motions before death. Very striking, too, was the panoramic effect when *Gurnemanz* conducted *Parsifal* to the castle. The four heavy sets of scenery were

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drawn off simultaneously toward the right, and the drop during which the final change took place was lowered for so short a time that the characters seemed to pass almost directly out of the rocky cavern into which they were last seen disappearing into the great hall of the castle.

This last was a beautiful interior of white, blue and gold, with long colonnades extending far into the background and a beautiful dome in the centre. One seemed to be actually standing in the hall and looking up into this dome almost to its roof. The religious service which followed was of a deeply devotional character, and certainly I have never heard in any church service an effect more spiritual than was produced by the boys' voices which floated down from the dome. It seemed as if every note were a dove-winged thought of religious faith. This was clearly the most beautiful effect produced during the entire performance, and it has been said that agnostics who have attended the performances of "Parsifal" have actually felt for the first time the influence of religious faith during this scene.

The second act also opened in an architectural structure, but of such different construction as to form of itself a dramatic contrast. In this scene *Klingsor*, the magician, summons *Kundry* before him, and, when *Parsifal* is seen approaching the magic garden, by a wave of his spear causes the structure to vanish and the garden to take its place. This change was wrought with lightning speed, the castle vanishing as if it had been swallowed up by the earth. In place

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of the sombre walls was a garden filled with huge flowers of garish colors. The effect was at first almost painful to the eye, but afterward the dramatic necessity for these exaggerated hues was apparent, for when *Klingsor* hurled the spear at *Parsifal*, and the latter, seizing it, made a sign of the cross and thereby changed the garden into a howling waste, the dreariness of this desert was enhanced by contrast with the bright colors of the garden. This change was another wonderful effect, everything being done so quickly that the flowers actually seemed to wither before the eyes of the spectators. The spear, it will be remembered, when it is hurled by *Klingsor* remains suspended over *Parsifal*. This mechanical effect is produced by having the weapon hung to an invisible wire, over which it slides by a loop, its swift course toward *Parsifal* being checked by an obstacle on the wire directly over *Parsifal's* head. He then simply reaches up for the spear, and by a quick gesture tears it off from its hanging.

The first scene of the last act was also in the forest and the effects were of similar beauty to those described in the forest scene in which the work opened, the final scene being again the hall of the castle.

The artists who enacted this work were Wagner's own choice. The part of *Parsifal* was sung alternately by Winkelman and Gudehus. These are both gifted actors and singers, and there is little to be said of either as against the other. Both simply did their parts admirably. *Kundry* was taken by Materna, Brandt and Malten. Of these three the last named

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best realized the ideal of *Kundry* in the second act when she appears as a beautiful, seductive woman. The two others in this scene hardly came up to Wagner's conception, as they lacked the necessary beauty of features. When Wagner requested Brandt to take the part of *Kundry* and when the latter realized that a beautiful woman was required to do the part justice in the second act, she wrote to Wagner that she did not think she had the necessary good looks. Wagner answered: "What I want is artistic feeling. Rouge and costume will do the rest."

Brandt therefore accepted, but she afterward had reason to regret the choice, as her experience at Bayreuth was unpleasant, Wagner showing his preference for Materna and Malten in a manner which, to say the least, was not very gallant toward a devoted artist. In the first and second acts Materna and Brandt were fully equal to the exacting demands of the character. Reichman was an admirable *Amfortas*. But the most striking performance was undoubtedly the *Gurnemanz* of Scaria, a noble creation, resonant musically and dramatically finished to the last detail, a perfect example of musical and dramatic art. This is really the only individual performance which stood out in bold relief against the rest, and perhaps it may be as much due to the striking character which Wagner drew as to the merits of the artist, for all engaged in this performance seemed devoted to the one idea, as grand as it is rare, of reproducing with the utmost fidelity the intentions of the poet and the composer. The difficult choruses were given in

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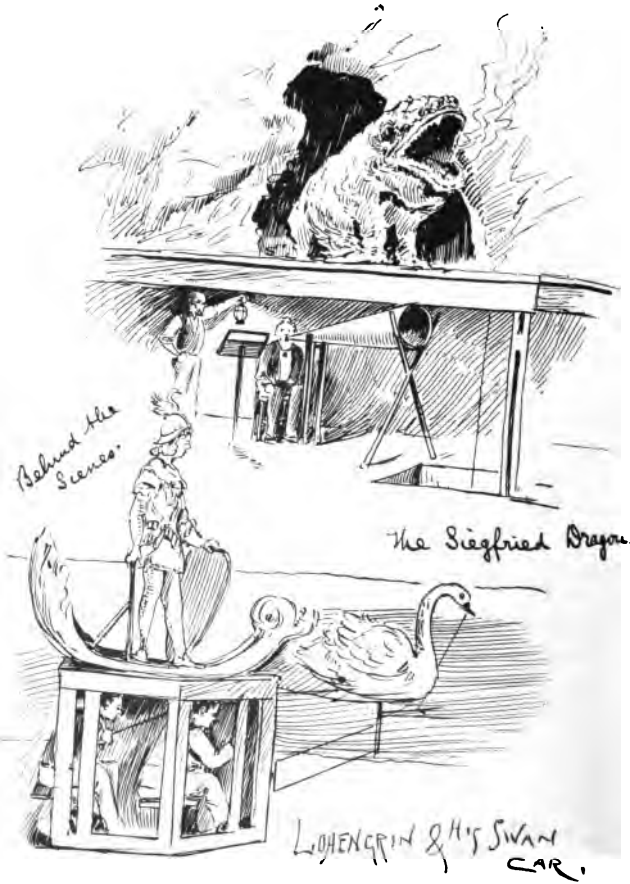

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a flawless manner and so was the orchestral portion of the work.

I have touched upon several of the ingenious mechanical properties used in "Parsifal." Probably the reader will be interested in a description of three other important Wagnerian properties—the "Lohengrin" swan and the "Siegfried" dragon and forge. These were described in a fully illustrated article, "Behind the Scenes of an Opera House," which I contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* of October, 1888 (Vol. IV., No. 4), the description being here reproduced with the permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons. The illustrations which accompanied the article were after photographs taken by me behind the scenes of the Metropolitan Opera House, Mr. Stanton, the managing director, courteously placing every facility at my disposal. The drawings of the swan, dragon and forge in this book are after other photographs taken by me at the same time.

The "Lohengrin" swan, as at present constructed, is the result of the survival of the fittest, its evolution having proceeded on the lines of the principle that a mechanical property should be so constructed that it can be worked by the smallest possible number of men. Formerly the miniature figures of the swan and *Lohengrin* having been drawn across the background, the knight of the Holy Grail and his ornithological motor suddenly emerged from behind one of the wings directly back of the river's bank and moved half way across the stage. There *Lohengrin* disembarked and sang his "Farewell, my faithful swan!"

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The latest improvement was devised in order that the swan might have the appearance of swimming down the winding stream. At the same time the apparatus was so constructed that it could be worked by only two men. The shell-like craft in which *Lohengrin* stands was built upon a three wheeled truck, the top of which was just concealed by the set piece representing the bank of the Scheldt. Under this truck sat two men in positions which enabled them to place their feet on the floor and thus shove the truck along, the man over the front wheel steering by means of a rod connected with this wheel. The swan is supported by two rods running out from the front of the truck.

The neck of the swan is "built" around a steel spring; the body and wings are feathers and swan's down upon wire work. It will be remembered that while *Lohengrin* sings his farewell the swan gracefully inclines its head and gently spreads its wings. The former motion is produced by a thin fishing line which is attached to the swan's beak and pulled by one of the men under the truck. The wings work by a clock movement. In the last act of "Lohengrin" the swan sinks from view—it is transformed into *Elsa's* brother—and a dove flutters in front of the boat as it bears the knight homeward. This change is effected very simply. The rods upon which the swan rests work on hinges and are held in position by two lines drawn taut by one of the men under the truck, who at the proper moment slackens the line, causing the rods to drop by the weight of the swan, which sinks out of sight.

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The man sitting near the front wheel then shoves out a rod to the end of which a mechanical dove is attached, it and the curved end of the rod having been concealed behind the prow of *Lohengrin's* shell-like little craft. When "Lohengrin" was first given at Her Majesty's, London, an attempt was made to introduce this apparatus. It was duly rehearsed, but at the performance the set-water strips were placed too near the bank, so cramping the truck's steering room that it crashed into the bank. Campanini, who was the *Lohengrin*, dropped sword and shield, and facing the audience shouted: "There's stage management for you!"

For the production of "Siegfried" at the Metropolitan Opera House a dragon was designed and manufactured which the German artists declare to be the most practical and impressive monster they have seen. The head of this dragon is of papier maché. The body, 30 feet long, is of thin wire covered with curled leather scales, which are bronzed and painted. This monster, in spite of its size, is worked by a boy who is the dragon's front legs. He is dressed in a suit of canvas painted the color of the dragon's hide and having curled leather scales on the trousers below the knees, his shoes being the huge clawed feet. He gets into the dragon behind its head, which conceals him from the waist up, his legs being the dragon's front legs.

With his hands he opens and closes its huge mouth and shoves its eyelids over its eyes when it expires. The steam which it breathes out is supplied through an elastic pipe which, entering at the tail, runs through

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to the throat. The scene lasts about forty minutes and is very exhausting to the front legs.

In Germany the artist who sings the dragon's part is inside the hide and sings through a speaking trumpet. At the Metropolitan Opera House the artist sits under the raised bridge upon which the dragon is placed and sings through a speaking trumpet. His music is on a stand, a stage hand throws the light of a lamp upon it, and the solo répétiteur gives him his cues from the wings. The voice sounds as though it issued through the dragon's throat. The advantage of this arrangement is that it places in the monster a person whose attention is concentrated upon working this mechanical property in the best possible manner. The dragon when not in commission is stabled in mid-air under the paint bridge. The day of the performance it is lowered by ropes, thoroughly groomed, and then allowed to stretch itself out upon the floor against the rear wall and lie there until the end of the first act.

The first act of "Siegfried" depends for its picturesqueness more on the successful management of the gas effects than on any other element of the performance. To "gas" this act is an exceedingly difficult problem, for in its course a great variety of light effects are introduced, a number of them simultaneously. For instance, no less than three different kinds of lighting come into play together every time *Siegfried* in the forging scene fans the fire with the bellows. In theatrical parlance the bellows "has to be practically gassed;" which means that the flaring up of the fire

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and its fitful gleaming upon the surrounding objects must be imitated. The manner in which these effects were produced is shown in the illustration of the rear view of the forge. This forge is a framework, the front, sides and top being covered. Sunk into the top is a space for a gas jet, a piece of split gas pipe and a tube leading into a box immediately underneath, which is filled with lycopodium powder. A person lying under the forge takes a rubber tube, which leads from this box into his mouth.

On the forge is a box painted to resemble a stone. In it are six incandescent electric lights behind a piece of red gelatine. The wire for these runs from a "pocket" in the wing. Near this is also the gas pocket from which the tube for supplying the gas jet and split pipe issues and runs along the stage to the hearth. The gas jet is lighted before the curtain rises. In the wings a man with a mirror stands near an electric light. What occurs when *Siegfried* pulls the handle of the bellows is as follows :

A man in the wings turns a cock admitting the gas to the tube which feeds the split pipe. The gas when it reaches the split is ignited by the burning jet. At the same time the man under the forge blows through the tube which leads into the box of lycopodium powder. A quantity of this volatile powder is thus blown up out of the box. Coming in contact with the jet and the flames from the split pipe, it blazes up, the ignited particles at the same time floating over the hearth and thus producing the effect of gaseous flames flickering over a bed of coal or embers

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and running in lambent undulations from the point at which the current from the bellows fanned the fire. The man who turns on the gas makes at the same time electrical connection with the box of incandescent lights, and these shining through the red gelatine throw a red glare upon *Siegfried*. At the same time the man with the mirror so manipulates it that the reflection of the electric light runs up and down the wing behind *Siegfried*.

In addition to the lights in the scene of the forging of the sword there are several independent light effects in this act. Among these are the glints of sunshine which play through the foliage of the forest back of *Mime*'s dwelling, and which inspire his terrorized mind with so much dread after the *Wanderer's* direful prophecy. To produce this effect here and in the *Waldweben* scene of the next act two panels of hammered white glass glazed with lead in irregular shapes (one of them arranged on a pin so that it can be slid sidewise over the other and back again) are held in front of an electric light, the sliding panel being moved rapidly to and fro. Then there are the lights thrown on *Wotan*, the sunlight in the forest, and the white light thrown on *Siegfried* just before the curtain goes down.

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WAGNER'S WRITINGS.

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WAGNER'S WRITINGS.

INTRODUCTORY.

WAGNER'S "Collected Literary Works" are contained in ten stout volumes—a formidable library, both as regards size and the character of its contents. Few even of his most ardent admirers are familiar with these writings as a whole; nor is such familiarity necessary to an intelligent appreciation of his art theories. His system can be explained in far more concise language than he has employed, for his language is anything but concise. It is often obscure and diffuse. Indeed a translator of Wagner's technical essays is usually obliged to first translate them into German—that is, from Wagnerian German into good German.

His most important technical essays relating to his own art theories are: "Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft" (The Art Work of the Future); "Oper und Drama" (Opera and Drama); "Zukunftsmusik" ('The Music of the Future'—the inverted commas show that the term did not originate with Wagner; in fact he

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quoted it from a hostile critic); "Ueber die Anwendung der Musik auf das Drama" (Music in its Relations to the Drama). Other technical works, more clearly and interestingly written than those relating to his art theories, are analyses of Beethoven's "Eroica," ninth symphony and "Coriolanus" overture and his own "Flying Dutchman," and "Tannhäuser" overtures and the *Vorspiel* to "Lohengrin," and on conducting; and related to this class of his writings the famous polemic "Das Judenthum in der Musik" (Judaism in Music). Several of his miscellaneous writings are fine literary productions. Indeed it may be said that the further he got away from technical matters the more facile he grew with the pen.

The novelettes written during his residence in Paris (1840 and 1841) are highly successful, especially the tragic tale "An End in Paris." It contains the famous musical creed: "I believe in God, Mozart and Beethoven and in their disciples and apostles!" An autobiographical sketch (to 1841) and reminiscences of Rossini, Auber, Spohr and Spontini are also brightly written; but probably the American lay reader is not very deeply interested in the subjects of the reminiscences. The essay on Beethoven is metaphysical, with all that term implies when applied to a German essay. His dramatic poems and a letter on Liszt's Symphonic Poems are also embraced in his "Collected Literary Works." There is, besides these published writings, a privately printed autobiography continuing the sketch referred to above.

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Edward L. Burlinghame, under the title of "Art Life and Theories of Richard Wagner" (in the Amateur Series, Henry Holt & Co., New York), has translated the "Autobiography" (the sketch to 1841), "The Love Veto, the Story of the First Performance of an Opera," "A Pilgrimage to Beethoven," "An End in Paris," "'Der Freischütz' in Paris," "The Music of the Future," "An Account of the Production of 'Tannhäuser' in Paris," "The Purpose of the Opera," "Musical Criticism," and "The Opera House at Bayreuth." Hueffer has translated the letter on Liszt's Symphonic Poems, and Dannreuther the essays "Beethoven," "The Music of the Future" and "On Conducting." Nothing in the "Collected Literary Works," both of those translated into English and remaining untranslated, compares in interest with the "Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt," which is frequently quoted in the biographical portion of this work.

The author is of the opinion that Wagner's theory of the true relations between music and drama is best set forth by analysis of his music dramas with the leading motives given in musical notation. He has pursued this course in the second volume of this work, and he believes that the lay reader will gain therefrom a better comprehension of the theory and method upon which Wagner proceeded than from the poet-composer's writings on the subject. He has, however, selected for translation that essay from the "Collected Literary Works" which appears to him the most clearly expressed and to be most likely to interest the lay reader—"Music in its Relations to the

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Drama. So far as he is aware no other English translation of it exists.

MUSIC IN ITS RELATIONS TO THE DRAMA.

My last essay on the opera closed with the suggestion that there exist certain essential and inherent differences between symphonic music and operatic composition, or purely orchestral music and music when it enters into combination with the drama. This suggestion I would like to use now as a leading thought; because I consider the subject to which it refers of sufficient importance to merit an extended examination, especially as it will have a tendency to enlighten or correct the views of some of our operatic composers. In my last communication I mentioned certain "bunglers" who take, without reason, unnecessary liberties with the muse, and others who regard with terror every act which conflicts with their traditionary ideas of decorum. The latter I stigmatized as "senators." This euphemistic expression for an epithet derived from the animal kingdom I have from *Iago*, who, when *Brabantio* says to him, "Thou art an ass," simply replies, "Thou art—a senator." *Iago's* respect for one of high political rank led him to substitute one term for the other, and with somewhat similar respect for scientific dignitaries I shall henceforward use the term "professor."

But to return to our subject. As an illustration of the difference in the musical styles of which I am treating I point at the outset, as an important example in the history of my art, to the fact that Beet-

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hoven, who was so daring in his symphonies, appears anxious and hesitating in "Fidelio." He found the outlines of operatic composition clearly defined; and I have previously expressed my conviction that he felt uncomfortable in such narrow limits, and was therefore unwilling to attempt the dramatic style more than once. That he should not have remoulded the proportions of operatic composition with the pressure of his powerful mind can be explained only by assuming that he was sufficiently employed in reconstructing the symphonic form, and that his craving for independence was satisfied by new departures in his purely instrumental works. And if we give close attention to the abundant fruits of these labors, we must acknowledge that Beethoven defined the plastic limits of orchestral music so clearly that even his own impulsive genius dared not overleap them. Yet we must regard these limits as conditions, required by the very nature of the system to which they are applied, rather than as hindering barriers. These plastic conditions are columns which give the symphonic structure firmness, consistency and clearly defined proportions.

Beethoven hesitated to alter the fundamental forms of the symphony as it had been transmitted by Haydn, just as an architect hesitates to move the columns of a building or to confuse what is horizontal and vertical. If the structure was conventional it naturally required this conventionality. The form of music called symphony is developed from the dance rhythm. It is impossible for me to repeat all I have

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said and proved elsewhere on this very subject. I can only point to what I consider the germ of the Haydn and Beethoven symphony. This origin excludes dramatic pathos, so that the most active complications of symphonic themes are never analogous to dramatic action, and can be regarded only as combinations of ideal dance measures, independent of verse or rhetoric. Here is not purpose or consummation, but for this reason dignified enjoyment only. Radically different melodies are never placed in opposition; however great the contrast may appear, they are reciprocal, like the male and female of the same species. But what a varied life these elements lead, how they may be separated for a while, how one may be forced from the other and then both reunited in passionate embrace—all this is portrayed in a single symphonic movement of Beethoven's; so vividly, indeed, as for instance in the first movement of the "Eroica," that, while it appears doubly clear to the initiated, the uninitiated may be misled.

I think I may affirm with justice that whoever endeavors to merge music in tragedy, or to use it with true dramatic effect, will face different conditions; conditions of whose requirements, as opposed to those of the symphonic school, he should give faithful account. Talented composers for the orchestra, who have sought to break through the barriers which hem in the traditionary form of instrumental music, have given their works certain titles and have allowed music alone to portray the dramatic action suggested thereby. That these efforts can never result in the

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ideal work of art has, I think, been frequently admitted, but nevertheless the composers who have made these attempts have not been mere idle dreamers, and the real, practical value of their labors has not as yet been fully acknowledged. The vagaries in which the demon that presided over the genius of Berlioz delighted assume, when reflected by the subtly artistic disposition of Liszt, innumerable physical and psychological proportions; so that it seemed to his disciples as though an entirely novel species of composition had been placed at their disposal.

It was at any rate astonishing to note with what elasticity music began to yield to the pressure of dramatic action. Before that time the overture to an opera or to theatrical pieces was the only substitute for the pure symphonic form. But in using this substitute composers proceeded with the greatest caution. Beethoven, for instance, after a purely theatrical effect in the middle of the "Leonore" overture, repeats the first part of the composition with the usual changes of key, unmindful of the fact that the hearer who is susceptible to dramatic influences would find the repetition inconsistent with dramatic purpose. Weber, in his overture to "Der Freischütz," was more consistent. After the intermediate movement of his work he reaches the conclusion by a compact and powerful thematic collision. And although we find in the most ambitious examples of programme music by the modern composers I spoke of above lines of the symphonic form which cannot be obliterated, their themes, harmonies and

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modulations have that passionate and eccentric character which they and their followers are obliged to adopt if they wish to portray as vividly as possible the poetic or dramatic figure floating before their eyes—characteristics which the symphonists pretend to abhor. When afterward the composers began to imagine words and gestures and to express these by means of instrumental recitatives, and when critics protested in holy horror against this dissolution of form, nothing remained but to construct of the various elements a new form—that of the music drama.

This new form differs as much from the old-fashioned opera as it does from the classical symphony. But before we cast more light on this subject let us glance at the works of those modern musicians who claim to have followed in the footsteps of classical composers, or, as they express it themselves, have "remained classical." Whenever I listen to the compositions of these modern "classicists" I seem to hear constant repetitions of the phrase, "We would if we could." Programme music, which "we" looked at askance, brought so many thematic and harmonic novelties and so many theatrical and pictorial effects (in landscape and even in history) which were vividly portrayed by means of improved method in orchestration, that only a Beethoven could have added interesting items to the repertory of classical symphony. "We" were silent. When at last "we" ventured to move "our" lips symphonically "we" began as soon as "we" noticed that "we" were

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becoming turgid and tedious to decorate "ourselves" with feathers of the programme petrel. In "our" symphonies, therefore, "we" present catastrophe and melancholy; "we" are at first gloomy and sad, then bold and adventurous; "we" strive to realize the dreams of youth; but some demon throws stumbling blocks in "our" way; at last "we" extract the sharp tooth of melancholy and, laughing humorously, display the bleeding gum.

All this is considered by Hungarians and Scotchmen thorough, hardy and honest; but by others it is thought tedious. After candid examination I cannot believe that the symphonic muse has gained much from the efforts of her modern disciples. Above all must I protest against their symphonies being considered legacies of Beethoven; for, although they may have stolen his melodies, they could not plagiarize his spirit. But it is not easy for the scholars of our conservatories to understand the difference in form that exists between the classical symphonies and those of the composers who "remain classical;" for their instruction regarding "æsthetic forms" consists in learning a number of names by heart, without being obliged to cultivate their judgment by instituting comparisons.

The composers I refer to, and whom I may call classical romanticists, differ from the wild stock of programme musicians in that they seem themselves sadly in need of a programme, and make use of certain tenacious melodies, which belong properly to chamber music, and were conceived and nurtured

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long ago in artistic seclusion. This seclusion the classical romanticists have exchanged for the concert hall; what was formerly used for quintettes and the like is now served up as a symphony; melodic chaff, to be prepared as tea for the melancholy, who have faith in any article which is marked "genuine." As a general thing, however, modern composers have given us seeming eccentricities which are explained by the underlying program. Mendelssohn, with delicate feeling, introduced his impressions of nature and traced in music what may be called an epic landscape. He had traveled much and had brought home sketches which others could not obtain. Nowadays the smooth genre paintings of local exhibitions are set to music and are supposed to justify strange instrumental effects, which at present are easily produced, and astonishing harmonies, with which familiar melodies are distorted, in order that they may not be recognized; and all this is presented as real instrumental music.

These preliminary observations establish the following propositions: Instrumental music was no longer satisfied to be under the control of the traditional symphonic form, and sought freedom in poetical representations; whatever reacted against this could not warm the classical features into life, and found it necessary to distort them by casting them in a strange mould. If the new departure increased the capabilities of musical expression it also proved that, if these capabilities were to be increased still further, music must turn to the drama for sup-

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port, without which it would soon terminate in disastrous chaos. What had remained unspoken was now to be clearly expressed, and at the same time the opera was to be released from hereditary slavery. In speaking of the music drama we will proceed to give a clear account of how music may be capable of an infinite number of noble, artistic forms.

According to æsthetics, unity is the most important element in a work of art. This abstract unity it is difficult to define in words, and false interpretation of it has often led to serious errors. It is most clearly defined in a complete work of art itself; for a work of art owes to its unity those symmetrical proportions which hold our attention and awaken our sympathy. This perfection is most frequently observed in the living representation of a great drama; and therefore we do not hesitate to pronounce the great drama the most perfect work of art. Its very opposite is the old-fashioned opera; because, in pretending to use the drama, it resolved that essential unity into small, detached fragments known as arias. As a result we find in the opera separate pieces of short duration, which, by superficial résumé of principal and subordinate themes, return, repetition and coda, suggest the form of a symphonic movement, but which bear no relation whatever to one another. For this reason Beethoven is seen turning disdainfully from the narrow limits of the operatic fragment, because the symphony offers broader and more copious treatment of the same form.

Here we recognize at a glance that unity which af-

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fects us so powerfully in the drama—a result which is weakened as soon as strange elements begin to make their appearance. These strange elements began to appear when symphonists attempted dramatic effects, because these effects require more elastic proportions than those of the symphony, which, as before stated, originated in the exceedingly narrow mould of the dance rhythm. Yet the new form of dramatic music requires, in order to be a work of art, that very unity which prevails throughout the classical symphony; and music complies with this condition only when it enters into the most intimate relations with the drama as a whole, rather than with a few elements of its own arbitrary choosing. Such unity will result in a work of art whose constituent parts are leading motives, which, like those of the symphonic movement, collide, reciprocate, renew their form, separate and reunite. But the order in which all this occurs is governed in the music drama by dramatic action, while in the symphony it is controlled by the progression of the dance.

Concerning the new form of musical composition in its relation to the drama, I think I have said enough elsewhere and with sufficient distinctness to enable others to criticise, justly and with benefit to themselves, the forms which in my music I have adapted from the drama. I have not been followed; and I am reminded of only one young friend who has employed leading motives more for their dramatic effect than with a view to constructing a new musical period. On the other hand, I have experienced that in musical institutions pupils are warned against the confusedness

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of my style, and that young composers, after a hasty glance at my scores, try to imitate me before they understand me. The state only pays professors who do not teach my theories; for instance, Josef Rheinberger, in Munich (probably that their champion may be near my field of action), instead of founding liberal professorships. The latter I can hope for only in America and England; and for this reason I will content myself at present with pointing out what portions of my scores the young composers I spoke of should study and assimilate.

I would at the outset caution those who have been educated in the schools of the classical romanticists to avoid, when they first attempt the dramatic style, unusual harmonic and instrumental effects, before a sufficient cause justifies their agency. Berlioz never felt more insulted than when musicians brought him all sorts of eccentric scores for inspection, hoping they would be praised by the composer of the "Witches' Sabbath" and such like. Liszt used to send away these musical nuisances with the remark that he did not like to be treated to cigar ashes and sawdust moistened with aqua regia. I never knew a young composer who did not expect me to sanction his eccentricities. From this I perceived that they were utterly regardless of the ever increasing care I take to avoid unnecessary harmonies and modulations. In the introduction to my "Rhinegold," for instance, I found it impossible to depart from the principal key, because there existed no reason for such a departure. A great part of the following scene between *Alberich*

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and the *Rhinedaughters*, which is not wholly devoid of action, had to be written in an intimate key, because here passion is expressed with primitive simplicity.

On the other hand, I do not deny I should have employed in the scene where *Donna Anna* appears clutching in extreme passion the betrayer *Don Juan* stronger colors than Mozart thought justifiable, before he had enriched the conventional forms of operatic expression. He was satisfied with a certain simplicity which I remembered when I introduced the "Walküre" with a storm and *Siegfried* with a passage which, containing certain themes modeled after motives in the preceding scores, brought the hearer gradually to the solitary smithy of *Nibelheim*. Here were the elements from which the drama was to be developed. Something further was required by the introduction to the scene between the sisters of fate in the "Götterdämmerung." Here the fates of the primeval world are twisted and wound until even the fibres of the rope which the mysterious sisters are seen swinging round and round as the curtain rises twist and wind with the complications of the universe. For this reason the introduction had to awaken feelings of anxious expectation; and, though it required concise treatment, it afforded opportunity to reproduce themes from the first three scores of the tetralogy, clothed with richer harmonies. But it is important how one begins.

Had I constructed an overture on the theme which accompanies the transmission of the government of

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the world from *Wotan* to the ruler of the Nibelungen-hort, I should, according to my notions, have made a most insane effort. But when I choose two simple motives, one of them the *Naturmotiv*, the other the theme through which *Walhalla* appears in the glow of the early morn, and allow them to participate in the drama with ever increasing passion, I can express with the proper use of strange harmonies the feelings of the sorrow stricken god better even than if I had chosen the theme I first mentioned. I am, however, conscious that I did not seek to thrust these strange harmonies upon my hearers as mere eccentricities, or for the sake of appearing bold. On the contrary, I endeavored by a retard in tempo and by carefully balanced dynamics to render the harmonic progressions as natural as possible, that I might retain the sympathy of the audience instead of breaking in rudely upon the sanctity of their feelings. For this reason I am opposed to productions of my operas unless they take place under my own supervision, because many Capellmeisters, by disregarding such combinations as should be carefully considered, by hurried tempos and by neglect of proper equipoise, have rendered my works unintelligible and, to some "professors," even repulsive.

The foregoing example can be applied to my music dramas generally. In addition thereto I may call attention to the numerous changes in the Motive of the Rhinedaughters, when they swim around the glittering "Rhinegold," with exclamations of childlike joy. By following this unusually simple theme in all

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its changes, when the action of the drama calls successively for its combination with almost every motive of the tetralogy, the careful student will find an example of the variations of which the music drama admits; and he will also note how the variations of this motive differ from those of our classic masters, which we view in quick succession and varied colors as through a musical kaleidoscope. This delicious effect was weakened as soon as strange elements crept into the original symphonic form. These elements were introduced with a view to dramatic results; but they developed into a weak imitation, whose style was blurred and whose individuality was unintelligible.

Not even those musicians who handle counterpoint with the greatest ease, whose imagination calls up the most fantastic figures, or whose invention produces wonderful harmonic combination, can or ought to force upon a symphonic theme the same numerous, delicate and varied poetical changes which the motives in a music drama naturally assume. The Rhine-daughter Motive, for instance, after expressing every passion which is awakened by the ever changing action of a drama, appears in the first act of the "Götterdämmerung" in a form which seems to me utterly inconsistent with the purposes of a symphony. For, although the motive in that peculiar phase seems to owe its existence to harmonic and thematic laws only, close inspection will show that the drama itself required the application of these laws. To adapt in a symphony what is found possible here would be at-

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tended with most pernicious results; for the effect which seems natural and logical in a music drama would in a symphony seem labored and unreasonable.

I do not care to repeat here all I have already said concerning music in its relation to the drama. I desired only to point out the differences in two applications of music, by a confusion of which one artistic form is ruined and the other misunderstood. And this seemed to me necessary to a full æsthetic understanding of the wonderful events in the development of music—the only art in which at the present time any healthy progress can be observed—whereas in regard to this very development there is now a most lamentable confusion of ideas. For in departing from symphonic laws, composers, when they approached the drama, never got farther than the opera, which only embarrassed the powers of the great symphonists. When we wonder at the infinite variety of forms created by similar powers when music is brought into proper communion with the drama, we must remember that these forms become blurred when transferred from the music drama to the symphony. As it would require too much space to follow up all these novel changes and their complicated relation, I close by pointing to the difference between the original form and modulations of the motive in a music drama and the salient points in the character and development of the symphonic theme.

Properly speaking, we can not conceive a principal symphonic theme with striking harmonic modulations; especially if it appears at first in such a dis-

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tracting outfit. The network of strange progressive harmonies with which the composer of "Lohengrin" closes the first arioso of "Elsa," who is entranced by the remembrance of a dream, would seem strained and unintelligible in the andante of a symphony; whereas in my music drama it is so logical and natural that I have never heard complaints to the contrary. This has its reason in the scenic action: *Elsa* steps forward in gentle sorrow, slowly and with modestly inclined countenance; only one musing glance interrupts her reverie. Her only answer is the relation of the dream which promises her relief; her glance had already told this, and now, looking boldly from the vision to the realization of its promises, she exclaims: "I will await his coming; he shall my champion be!" Then the musical phrase returns, after numerous digressions, to the original key. A young friend, to whom I sent the score for piano arrangement, was astonished at the many modulations to which this phrase was subjected in so few bars. But he was more astonished to find these changes perfectly natural at the first performance of "Lohengrin" at Weimar under Liszt, who had changed the optical spectre to a well formed tone figure.

It seems to me that there is a great deal in my works against which "professors" protest which appears quite simple to the majority of unprejudiced listeners. Should they place me in their chairs they would probably be dumbfounded at the moderation in the use of harmonic effects I should recommend to their pupils. The first rule I should lay down would be: "Never

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leave a key so long as you can say what you have to say—in that key." If this rule were followed, we might expect to hear symphonies worthy of comment, instead of our latest symphonies, which are beneath notice.

For that reason I now remain silent, until I am called to a conservatory—but not as "professor."

FROM THE "MUSIC OF THE FUTURE."

In Italy, where the opera was first elaborated, no other task has ever been set before the musician than to write a number of airs for special singers, in whom dramatic talent was entirely a secondary consideration —airs that should give these virtuosi an opportunity to bring into play their several specific vocal powers. All that poetry and scenery contributed to this exhibition of the performer's art was an excuse for time and space for it. With the singer alternated the dancer, who danced precisely the same as the other sang; and the composer had no other task than to contribute variations on a certain selected type of tune.

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For the German musician who looked out from his own field of choral and instrumental music upon that of dramatic music there existed no complete and attractive form in the line of opera which, by its relative perfection, could serve him as an example in such a way as he could be served in those classes of music which were more in his own school. While a noble, completed form of composition lay before him in the oratorio, and especially in the symphony, the opera

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merely offered him a disconnected chaos of trifling and undeveloped methods, upon which there rested the burden of a conventionality incomprehensible to him and subversive of all efforts towards free development.

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It is said that Rossini once asked his teacher if it was necessary to learn counterpoint in order to compose an opera? And as the latter, having in mind the modern Italian opera, replied that it was not, his pupil gladly abandoned it. After my teacher had taught me the most difficult portions of counterpoint he said to me: "Probably you will never have occasion to write a fugue; but the fact that you can write one will give you technical independence and make everything else easy to you."

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Having at hand the opinions of the greatest critics —the investigations, for instance, of a Lessing into the limits of painting and poetry—I believed that I might form the theory that every individual branch of art follows out a development of its powers that finally leads it to their limits, and that it cannot pass these limits without the danger of losing itself in the unintelligible and absolutely fantastic, even in the absurd. I thought that I saw in this point the necessity for it to join companionship at this stage with another class of art, related to it, and the only one capable of going on from this position.

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The conflict between the adherents of Gluck and those of Piccini, in Paris, was nothing but a contro-

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versy (from its very nature indecisive) on the question whether the ideal of the drama was attainable through the opera. Those who believed they could sustain successfully the affirmative side of this question were, in spite of their apparent victories, held in serious check by their opponents as soon as these latter treated music as predominating in opera to such an extent that the result was to be attributed to it and not to poetry. Voltaire, who in the abstract inclined to the affirmative opinion, saw himself forced, as far as the concrete state of the case was concerned, to the condemnatory remark: "Ce qui est trop sot pour être dit on le chante"—(what is too stupid to be spoken is sung).

Let us establish first of all the fact that the one true form of music is melody; that without melody music is inconceivable, and that music and melody are inseparable.

That a piece of music has no melody can, therefore, only mean that the musician has not attained to the real formation of an effective form that can have a decisive influence upon the feelings, which simply shows the absence of talent in the composer, his want of originality compelling him to make up his piece from hackneyed melodic phrases to which the ear is utterly indifferent. But in the mouth of the uncultured frequenter of the opera, and when used with regard to real music, the expression of this opinion betrays the fact that only a fixed and narrow form of melody is meant, such as (as we have already seen) belongs to a very childish stage of musical art; and

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for this reason an exclusive liking for such a form must also seem childish to us.

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The great melody I have in mind should produce an effect upon one's spirits like that which a beautiful forest produces in a summer evening upon a lonely wanderer who has but just left the town. The peculiarity of this impression, which I leave to the experienced reader to trace out in all its effects upon the soul, is the appreciation of a silence that grows more and more eloquent with every moment. It is enough for the objects of a work of art, generally speaking, if it has produced this fundamental impression, and can by its means sway the listener and bring him still further into a mood of higher purpose; unconsciously he begins to share its elevating tendency. But the wanderer in the wood, when, overcome by the general impression, he is fairly established in the lasting mood that follows it, develops his mental powers into new capabilities of perception, listens ever more keenly, as one who hears with new senses and becomes with every moment more distinctly conscious of endlessly varied voices that are abroad in the forest. New and various ones constantly join, such as he never remembers to have heard before, and as they multiply in numbers they increase in mysterious power. They grow louder and louder, and so many are the voices, the separate tunes he hears, that the whole, strong, clear swelling music seems to him again only the great forest melody that enchained

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him with awe at the beginning, just as the deep blue heaven at night had riveted his gaze, which, the longer it remained absorbed in the spectacle, saw more distinctly, clearly and brightly its countless hosts of stars. This melody will forever echo within him, yet he cannot hum it over to himself, and to hear it again he must go again into the woods on a summer evening as before. How foolish would he be if he sought to catch one of these bright forest songsters, to carry it home with him that it might whistle for him some little part of that great forest melody. What else would he hear, if he did so, but simply a bit of melody, after all?

FROM "OPERATIC POETRY AND COMPOSITION."

I have frequently noticed during my long experience that many who visit the opera pay little heed to the plot or action which the music is supposed to represent. This is not, perhaps, a matter for regret in such operas as "Don Juan" or "Nozze de Figaro," because, as long as the embarrassing situations remain unintelligible to youthful hearers, the music of these operas can always form parts of a course of study without corrupting the morals of the student. It is quite fortunate that the plot of "Robert le Diable" and "The Huguenots" can be understood only by the initiated; but I was surprised to hear the other day that even "The Freischütz" remained a mystery to many until I became conscious that I myself did not perfectly recollect some of the parts, even though I

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had conducted the opera time and again. My friends first blamed our singers and then began to abuse their pronunciation, when I called their attention to the fact that many operas contain a good deal of spoken dialogue. This frequently keeps German audiences in total ignorance of plot and action—an ignorance, however, which I believe many composers share with them. In France people require a fine *pièce;* the libretto must be amusing, even without the music, except perhaps in the grand opera, where a good ballet condones for the greatest insipidity.

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The librettos of Italian operas are very trifling, since in Italy operas are composed not according to the requirements of good music, but of bravura singers. Yet even Italian operas, although they are all written according to one and the same pattern, are more enjoyable if the hearer has an idea of the plot and action. Not even this, however, can save Rossini's "Semiramide."

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In "Nozze de Figaro" Mozart proves himself thoroughly conversant with the methods of his art. His work was so symmetrical that he was justified in refusing, even at the emperor's request, to allow a single note to be struck out of some parts of the opera. Into what would have been tedious recitative in Italian operas Mozart breathed life and soul. As in Beethoven's symphonies even a pause is eloquent, so in Mozart's

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opera everything is full of spirit and action, and the orchestral intermezzos give full musical expression to the struggle between cunning and cool foresight on the one hand and passionate brutality on the other. The dialogue is music and the music is dialogue, something which Mozart could not have accomplished without a knowledge of instrumentation unheard of until then, and perhaps not even equaled in our own day.

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A German prince, who thought he could compose operas, sent me word, through my friend Liszt, that he desired my aid in the orchestration of his work, and that he was particularly anxious to profit by the effective manner in which I employed the trombones in "Tannhäuser;" whereupon Liszt gave him the recipe by saying that I never scored before I had an idea.

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Years ago the success of my operas at the Royal Theatre in Dresden attracted the attention of F. Hiller, and afterward of Robert Schumann, for both wondered how a composer who was hardly known could keep his works before the public. Finally they attributed my success to my librettos, and came to ask my aid in writing the text for operas of their own. This assistance they afterward declined, fearing, no doubt, I might play them some mean trick. Of "Lohengrin," Schumann said that it was unfit for musical accompaniment, though his opinion differed widely

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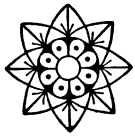
from that of Taubert in Berlin, who liked my libretto, and said, after he had heard my opera, that *he would like to write music of his own to my text.* No representations of mine could induce Schumann to eliminate the insipid third act from the libretto to "Genoveva." Yet no one seems disposed to censure such total disregard of artistic principles.



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WAGNER'S CRITICS.

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WAGNER'S CRITICS.

RICHARD WAGNER has been censured for his arrogance and his bitterness. Yet his critics were the first to open the sluices of invective. Were they not the men who, when Wagner was young and struggling for recognition, took advantage of their position as critics to cast every slur upon his efforts and to abuse his music as though he were committing a crime against the art and trying to throttle it outright? Mendelssohn opened the war by declaring that Wagner was only a talented dilettante, and Schumann followed him when he said, speaking of "Tannhäuser:" "Wagner is, to tell the plain truth, not a good musician; he lacks form and is wanting in ideas of euphony. * * * His music is hollow, disagreeable and often amateurish." After him other musicians and writers, belonging to Germany, France and England, continued to sharpen their wit on the music of the future. The *Echo*, a musical journal published in Berlin, called the tetralogy "Bayreuth cabbage." A Lyonese feuilletonist spoke of Wagner as the "méprisable Bavarois," and a London critic

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described his compositions as "weeds growing on the grave of Beethoven."

There is a very interesting book, published by Joh. André, in Offenbach, known as the "Richard Wagner Catalogue." In it Kastner and Tappert, admirers of the composer, have collected all that has been said or written concerning the object of their devotion in pamphlets, monographs, musical periodicals and daily journals. The work has been carried out faithfully, too faithfully perhaps in some respects, for it contains many remarks and aphorisms which can be but the growth of heated discussion or after dinner wit.

Musical criticism has increased during the present century, and its growth is perhaps greatly due to the animosity of Wagner's opponents who attacked his theories in the columns of the press, while he defended them not only by critical verbiage, but by the more practical method of illustration in his musical compositions. Wagner's animosity appears pardonable, his labors seem stupendous after a perusal of the volume issued by Messrs. Kastner and Tappert. He entered upon his career when custom fettered the thoughts of musicians and controlled the opinions of critics, who in turn dictated their system of musical ethics to the public. Wagner stood almost alone. Against him were arrayed technical forms sanctioned by long usage; so-called composers, who pillaged the works of great predecessors, and hated him because they feared a reformer who despised and exposed them, and critics who thought that, having read all existing books on

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music, they could learn no more; who forgot that genius never follows existing laws, but creates new laws of its own; and who had taught audiences to regard established forms as indispensable to musical composition. As a result, Wagner met with more than passive resistance—with open warfare. His opponents were vindictive and bitter, and at first he met them almost single handed. Admiration for his courage, which seemed to grow as the opposition increased, kept him before the public, until he had gathered around him a sufficient number of supporters to achieve the brilliant triumph of Bayreuth.

The Wagner Catalogue furnishes a good many specimens of the deplorable condition of German and French musical criticism not so many years ago.

"Tannhäuser" seems to have troubled others quite as much as it did Mendelssohn and Schumann. "*Se tannhäuser*" (to be bored) was a verb in common use among the frequenters of the Paris boulevards. A parody on the opera was published in France, entitled "*Tanne-aux-airs*, par M. Vagnes-Nerfs," in which *Elizabeth* figures as *Elisa-bête*. Scudo says the overture is a badly constructed musical machine; and Truhn, in the *Berliner Figaro* of 1873, calls the song to the evening star a cat serenade. In 1856 Dr. Eduard Schmidt called "Tannhäuser" "music of dissonances," and foretold its disappearance from the stage after two performances. During the same year another Berlin critic, Otto Lindner, exclaimed in the *Vossische Zeitung:* "What a difference between a talented man and a musician of the future!"

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Of the overture to "The Flying Dutchman" it was said that it made one seasick to hear it; the overture to "Rienzi" is called circus music, in No. 34 of the *Echo* for 1872, and the same paper exclaimed (No. 22, 1871): "Wagner's huge, tragic, bombastic 'Rienzi,' this operatic monstrum! the musical value of the score equals zero and is far below the standard of Bellini." In 1873 the *Echo* speaks of "the brassy opera 'Lohengrin,' a caricature of music."

E. Berusdart calls the "Faust Overture" hollow and tedious. "The Meistersinger," however, excited most ridicule. On the 4th of April, 1870, the *Montags Zeitung* of Berlin had the following squib: "The manager of the Royal Opera has issued this manifesto: Since capital punishment has been abolished no one is obliged to hear 'The Meistersinger' more than once." In November, 1875, the same paper remarked: "The Royal Opera troupe will soon give 'The Meistersinger,' that most terrible of terrible operas." An imaginary operatic manager, about to produce this work, asks: "Why was I born in the same century with this fellow?" Ferdinand Hiller calls the riot scene in "The Meistersinger" "the most insane attempt to murder art, taste, music and poetry."

"Tristan und Isolde" also came in for a good round of abuse. Ed. Scheller remarked in 1865: "The poem is in every respect absurd; the music, with the exception of a few numbers, is the refined brewing of a debilitated and morbid imagination." The following also should be quoted: "The introduction to 'Tristan und Isolde' is a chaos of sound. One would think a bomb

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had exploded in the midst of a musical composition and scattered the notes." Heinrich Dorn calls the "Kaisermarsch" an insult to the Emperor of Germany.

Apropos of "Rhinegold," Hanslick wrote that the text was made up of bombastic, alliterative stammerings. It was also called, from the peculiar cries of the *Rhinedaughters*, "wigalaweia" music, and the scene in which the *Rhinedaughters* appear is called an "aquarium" by Wilhelm Mohr. "The composer of the 'Nibelungen' is an idle dreamer," said O. Triese, in 1874, and the tetralogy is characterized as "music stuffed with leading motives." In the *Echo* (No. 39, 1876), Speidel, writing of the same work, says: "Wagner, none of whose musical ideas are drawn from the depths of his nature, is a clever imitator of actual events; his music is like an educated monkey."

In May, 1872, Speidel had written: "Richard Wagner's artistic career can no longer be separated from the artistic career of entire Germany. * * * Richard Wagner is undoubtedly the greatest operatic composer of our time. * * * Without regarding the merits or demerits of his work it can be said to possess some positive qualities: it creates enthusiasm—enthusiasm among the entire German nation—wherever it visits the opera. * * * The German nation sees in it the realization of its ideal; and whoever tears away that ideal tears it out of the heart of the entire race." During the years from 1872 to 1876 there must have been a curious revolution in Mr. Speidel's ideas.

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The following, from the *Berliner Montags Zeitung*, May 4, 1874, is a hit at "Die Walküre:"

"For the fair in support of the Wagner fund we have received:

"Cigar cases of burst drum skins.

"Piano arrangement of the score of the opera 'Cosima* Fan tutti,' by Hans v. Bülow.

"Ear wads for people who are going to the performances of the 'Walküre.'"

Albert Wagner, Richard's brother, said: "He can write poetry, but he can't compose."

Beside the criticisms applied to specific compositions, many offensive remarks were applied generally to the music of the future and its supporters.

These are a few instances:

"It is a well-known fact that 99 per cent. of Wagner's admirers are unmusical." (H. Truhn, April, 1872.)

"The so-called dramatic music of the Chinese is unmusical and declamatory, like the music of the future." (*Signale*, 1863.)

"Richard Wagner stretches the imagination with the same means as romancists and charlatans."

"Berlioz and Wagner are two *enfants terribles* of Beethoven."

No. 38 of the Vienna *Signale*, 1864, says: "Since Wagner has found a solid basis in Munich for wholesale operatic performances, there is a feeling of security in Vienna, because, no doubt, the next Wagner operas will explode in Munich."

* The name of Liszt's daughter, who married Von Bülow, was divorced from him and then married Wagner.

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Joachim refused the invitation of the committee of the Vienna Beethoven Festival because Wagner also had been similarly requested to co-operate, whereupon the *Echo* remarks: "No one will doubt the privilege of private persons to avoid the society of suspicious characters; in the case of an artist this right should be denied least of all."

"Moral seediness is the proper expression for the feeling engendered by hearing Wagner's music." (Dr. W. Mohr, 1872.)

Wagner's followers are called "a vulgar crowd" more than once, and Paul Heyse summed up the characteristics of his music in the words "pathetic cancan."

Wagner himself is called the great cacophonist; a literary, poetical and musical humbug; a Don Quixote; a musical Münchausen; the hangman of modern art; the noisiest man of our century; and finally, in terms of irony, Richard the Great, the infallible, the Divine, the Pope among musicians! (*Signale*).

Numerous other specimens of the vituperations indulged in by Wagner's opponents might be quoted, but many are lengthy articles.

Wagner, like every true artist, strove for recognition—not of himself—but of the ideal he worshipped. He dictated to the public, and at first the public rebelled. Had he then made concessions he might have enjoyed immediate wealth and popularity. If he abandoned old forms it was not because he could not, but because he would not follow in the traditionary path. For he had laid down for his guidance during his artis-

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tic career certain principles, and from these he never swerved. Opposition only strengthened him and nerved him for the great struggle. What he felt to be true the public should acknowledge to be true, and to this end he cast aside all hope of immediate success and dedicated his life to the art he loved so well. And so he kept on his way. The public wondered and critics scoffed, then the public began to follow, at first reluctantly, at last cheerfully—in spite of the fact that critics continued to dredge their brains.

As before remarked, all that has been said, both by friend and foe, is gathered in the volume of Messrs. Kastner and Tappert, and the book forms for this reason an excellent review of the great musical struggle.

To the historian it is of incalculable value. The future writer who can look calmly and dispassionately upon the heated discussions of our generation will perhaps smile superciliously at arguments which time has taught him to regard as useless, and criticism which in his day he will know to have been unavailing. For if it were possible to draw aside the curtain which hides the future of the divine art, it would not be surprising to find that, long after the captious critics of the great reformer had been forgotten, Wagner's compositions were transmitted from generation to generation as enduring monuments of his fame, and should some of his critics be remembered it would be only because, though small hunters, they went gunning after such big game.

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WAGNER'S OPERAS.

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WAGNER'S OPERAS.

"RIENZI."

"Rienzi" is based upon Bulwer's novel of the same title, the scene of the opera being laid in Rome toward the middle of the fourteenth century. *Orsini*, a Roman patrician, attempts to abduct *Irene*, the sister of *Rienzi*, a papal notary, but is opposed at the critical moment by *Colonna*, another patrician. A fight ensues between the two factions, in the midst of which *Adriano*, the son of *Colonna*, who is in love with *Irene*, appears to defend her. A crowd is attracted by the tumult, and among others *Rienzi* comes upon the scene. Enraged at the insult offered his sister, and stirred on by *Cardinal Raimondo*, he urges the people to resist the outrages of the nobles. *Adriano* is impelled by his love for *Irene* to cast his lot with her brother. The nobles are overpowered, and appear at the capitol to swear allegiance to *Rienzi*, but during the festal proceedings *Adriano* warns him that the nobles have plotted to kill him. An attempt which *Orsini* makes upon him with a dagger is frustrated by a steel breast plate which *Rienzi* wears under his robe.

The nobles are seized and condemned to death, but on *Adriano's* pleading they are spared. They, how-

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ever, violate their oath of submission, and the people again under *Rienzi's* leadership rise and exterminate them, *Adriano* having pleaded in vain. But the popular tide turns against *Rienzi*, especially in consequence of the report that he is in league with the German emperor, and intends to restore the Roman pontiff to power. As a festive procession is escorting *Rienzi* to church *Adriano* rushes upon him with a drawn dagger, being infuriated at the slaughter of his family, but the blow is averted. Instead of the *Te Deum*, however, with which *Rienzi* expected to be greeted on his entrance to the church he hears the malediction and sees the ecclesiastical dignitaries placing the ban of excommunication against him upon the doors. *Adriano* hurries to *Irene* to warn her of her brother's danger, and urges her to seek safety with him in flight. She, however, repels him, and seeks her brother, determined to die with him, if need be. She finds him at prayer in the capitol, but rejects his counsel to save herself with *Adriano*. *Rienzi* appeals to the infuriated populace which has gathered around the capitol, but they do not heed him. They fire the capitol with their torches, and hurl stones at *Rienzi* and *Irene*. As *Adriano* sees his beloved one and her brother doomed to death in the flames, he throws away his sword, rushes into the capitol and perishes with them.

The overture of "Rienzi" gives a vivid idea of the action of the opera. Soon after the beginning there is heard the broad and stately melody of *Rienzi's* prayer, and then the Rienzi Motive, a typical phrase which is used with great effect later in the opera. It is the only

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motive employed in the work, is not at all varied, and while interesting as showing the bent of Wagner's mind can hardly be said to foreshadow his masterly system of later invention. It is followed in the overture by the lively melody heard in the concluding portion of the finale of the second act. These are the three most conspicuous portions of the overture, in which there are, however, numerous tumultuous passages reflecting the dramatic excitement which pervades many scenes.

The opening of the first act is full of animation, the orchestra depicting the tumult which prevails during the struggle between the nobles. *Rienzi's* brief recitative is a masterpiece of declamatory music, and his call to arms is spirited. It is followed by a trio between *Irene*, *Rienzi* and *Adriano*, and this in turn by a duet for the two last named which is full of fire. The finale opens with a double chorus for the populace and the monks in the Lateran, accompanied by the organ. Then there is a broad and energetic appeal to the people from *Rienzi*, and amid the shouts of the populace and the ringing tones of the trumpets the act closes.

The insurrection of the people against the nobles is successful, and *Rienzi*, in the second act, awaits at the capitol the patricians who are to pledge him their submission. The act opens with a broad and stately march, to which the messengers of peace enter. They sing a graceful chorus. This is followed by a chorus for the senators, and the nobles then tender their submission. There is a terzette between *Adriano*, *Colonna* and

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Orsini, in which the nobles express their contempt for the young patrician. The finale which then begins is highly spectacular. There is a march for the embassadors, and a grand ballet, somewhat historical in character, and supposed to be symbolical of the triumphs of ancient Rome. In the midst of this occurs the assault upon *Rienzi*. *Rienzi's* pardon of the nobles is conveyed in a broadly beautiful melody, and this is succeeded by the animated passage heard in the overture. With it are mingled the chants of the monks, the shouts of the people who are opposed to the cardinal and nobles, and the tolling of bells.

The third act opens tumultuously. The people have been aroused by fresh outrages on the part of the nobles. *Rienzi's* emissaries disperse, after a furious chorus, to rouse the populace to vengeance. After they have left, *Adriano* has his great air, a number which can never fail of effect when sung with all the expression of which it is capable. The rest of the act is a grand accumulation of martial music or noise, whichever one chooses to call it, and includes the stupendous battle hymn, which is accompanied by the clashing of swords and shields, the ringing of bells, and all the tumult incidental to a riot. In this the Rienzi Motive is introduced with great effect. After *Adriano* has pleaded in vain with *Rienzi* for the nobles, and the various bands of armed citizens have dispersed, there is a duet between *Adriano* and *Irene*, in which *Adriano* takes farewell of her. The victorious populace appears, and the act closes with their triumphant shouts. The fourth act is brief, and, beyond the de-

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scription given in the synopsis of the part, requires no further comment.

The fifth act opens with the beautiful prayer of *Rienzi*, already familiar from the overture. There is a tender duet between *Rienzi* and *Irene*, an impassioned aria for *Rienzi*, a duet for *Irene* and *Adriano*, and then the finale, which is chiefly choral.

"THE FLYING DUTCHMAN."

From "Rienzi" Wagner took a giant stride to "The Flying Dutchman." This is the first milestone on the road from the opera to the music drama. Of "Rienzi" the composer was in after years ashamed, writing to Liszt: "I, as an artist and man, have not the heart for the reconstruction of that, to my taste, superannuated work, which, in consequence of its immoderate dimensions, I have had to remodel more than once. I have no longer the heart for it, and desire from all my soul to do something new instead." He spoke of it as a youthful error, but in "The Flying Dutchman" there is little, if anything, which could have troubled his artistic conscience. One can hardly imagine the legend more effectively treated dramatically and musically than it is in Wagner's libretto and score. It is a work of wild and sombre beauty, relieved only occasionally by touches of light and grace, and has all the interest attaching to a work in which for the first time a genius feels himself conscious of his greatness. If it is not as impressive as "Tannhäuser" or "Lohengrin," nor as stupendous as the music dramas, that is because the subject of the work

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is lighter. As his genius developed, his choice of subjects and his treatment of them passed through as complete an evolution as his musical theory, so that when he finally abandoned the operatic form and adopted the system of the leading motives, he conceived as the dramatic basis of his scores dramas which it would be difficult to fancy set to any other music than that which is characteristic of his music dramas.

Wagner's libretto is based upon the weirdly picturesque legend of "The Flying Dutchman"—the Wandering Jew of the ocean. A Dutch captain, who, we are told, attempted to double the Cape of Good Hope in the teeth of a furious gale, swore that he would accomplish his purpose even if he kept on sailing forever. The devil, hearing the oath, condemned the captain to sail the sea until the judgment day, without hope of release, unless he could find a woman who would love him faithfully unto death. Once in every seven years he is allowed to go ashore in search of a woman who will redeem him through her faithful love.

The opera opens just as a term of seven years has elapsed. "The Flying Dutchman" comes to anchor in a bay of the coast of Norway, in which the ship of *Daland*, a Norwegian sea captain, has sought shelter from the storm. *Daland's* home is not far from the bay, and the *Dutchman*, learning he has a daughter, asked permission to woo her, offering him in return all his treasures. *Daland* readily consents. His daughter, *Senta*, is a romantic maiden, upon whom the legend of "The Flying Dutchman" has made a deep impression. As *Daland* ushers the *Dutchman* into his

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home, *Senta* is gazing dreamily upon a picture representing the unhappy hero of the legend. The resemblance of the stranger to the face in this picture is so striking that the emotional girl is at once attracted to him, and pledges him her faith, deeming it her mission to save him. Later on, *Eric*, a young huntsman, who is in love with her, pleads his cause with her, and the *Dutchman*, overhearing them, and thinking himself again forsaken, rushes off to his vessel. *Senta* cries out that she is faithful to him, and endeavors to follow him, but is held back by *Eric*, *Daland* and her friends. The *Dutchman*, who really loves *Senta*, then proclaims who he is, thinking to terrify her, and at once puts to sea. But she, undismayed by his words, and truly faithful unto death, breaks away from those who are holding her, and rushing to the edge of a cliff casts herself into the ocean, with her arms stretched out toward him. The phantom ship sinks, the sea rises high and falls back into a seething whirlpool. In the sunset glow the forms of *Senta* and the *Dutchman* are seen rising in each other's embrace from the sea and floating upward.

In "The Flying Dutchman" Wagner employs several leading motives, not, indeed, with the skill which he displays in his music dramas, but with considerably greater freedom of treatment than in "Rienzi." There we had but one leading motive, which never varied in form. The overture, which may be said to be an eloquent and beautiful musical narrative of the whole opera, contains all these leading motives. It opens with a stormy passage, out of which there bursts the

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strong but sombre Motive of the Flying Dutchman himself, the dark hero of the legend. The orchestra fairly seethes and rages like the sea roaring under the lash of a terrific storm. And through all this furious orchestration there is heard again and again the motive of the *Dutchman*, as if his figure could be seen amid all the gloom and fury of the elements. There he stands, hoping for death, yet indestructible. As the excited music gradually dies away, there is heard a calm, somewhat undulating phrase which occurs in the opera when the *Flying Dutchman's* vessel puts into the quiet Norwegian harbor. Then, also, there occurs again the motive of the *Dutchman*, but this time played softly, as if the storm driven wretch had at last found a moment's peace.

We at once recognize to whom it is due that he has found this moment of repose, for we hear like prophetic measures the strains of the beautiful ballad which is sung by *Senta* in the second act of the opera, in which she relates the legend of "The Flying Dutchman" and tells of his unhappy fate. She is the one whom he is to meet when he goes ashore. The entire ballad is not heard at this point, only the opening measures of it, and these may be taken as indicating in this overture the simplicity and beauty of *Senta's* character. In fact, it would not be too much to call this opening phrase the Senta Motive. It is followed again by the phrase which indicates the coming to anchor of the *Dutchman's* vessel; then we hear again the motive of the *Dutchman* himself, dying away with the faintest possible effect. With sudden energy the

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orchestra dashes into the surging ocean music again, introducing this time the wild, pathetic plaint sung by the *Dutchman* in the first act of the opera. Again we hear his motive, and again the music seems to represent the surging, swirling ocean when aroused by a furious tempest. Even when we hear the measures of the sailors' chorus the orchestra continues its furious pace, making it appear as if the sailors were shouting above the storm. Characteristic in this overture, and also throughout the opera, especially in *Senta's* ballad, is what may be called the Ocean Motive, which most graphically depicts the wild and terrible aspect of the ocean during a storm. It is varied from time to time, but never loses its characteristic force and weirdness. The overture ends with an impassioned burst of melody based upon a portion of the concluding phrases of *Senta's* ballad; phrases which we hear again at the end of the opera when she sacrifices herself in order to save her lover.

A wild and stormy scene is disclosed when the curtain rises upon the first act. The sea occupies the greater part of the scene, and stretches itself out far toward the horizon. A storm is raging. *Daland's* ship has sought shelter in a little cove formed by the cliffs. Sailors are employed in furling sails and coiling ropes. *Daland* is standing on a rock, looking about him to discover in what place they are. The orchestra, chiefly with the wild ocean music heard in the overture, depicts the raging of the storm, and above it are heard the shouts of the sailors at work: "Ho-jo-he! Hal-lo-jo!" *Daland* discovers that they have missed

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their port by seven miles on account of the storm, and deplores his bad luck that when so near his home and his beloved child he should have been driven out of his course. As the storm seems to be abating the sailors descend into the hold and *Daland* goes down into the cabin to rest, leaving his steersman in charge of the deck. The steersman walks the deck once or twice and then sits down near the rudder, yawning, and then rousing himself as if sleep were coming over him. As if to force himself to remain awake he intones a sailor song, an exquisite little melody, with a dash of the sea in its undulating measures. He intones the second verse, but sleep overcomes him and the phrases become more and more detached, until he at last falls asleep.

The storm begins to rage again and it grows darker. Suddenly the ship of the *Flying Dutchman*, with blood red sails and black mast, looms up in the distance. She glides over the waves as if she did not feel the storm at all, and quickly enters the harbor over against the ship of the Norwegian ; then silently and without the least noise the spectral crew furl the sails. The *Dutchman* goes on shore.

Here now occurs the weird, dramatic recitative and aria : "The term is passed, and once again are ended seven long years." As he is leaning in brooding silence against a rock in the foreground, *Daland* comes out of the cabin and observes the strange ship. He rouses the steersman, who begins singing again a phrase of his song, until *Daland* points out the strange ship to him, when he springs

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up and hails her through a speaking trumpet. *Daland*, however, perceives the *Dutchman* and going ashore questions him. It is then that the *Dutchman*, after relating a mariner's story of ill luck and disaster, asks *Daland* to take him to his home and allow him to woo his daughter, and offers him his treasures. At this point we have a graceful and pretty duet, *Daland* readily consenting that the *Dutchman* accompany him. The storm having subsided and the wind being fair the crews of the vessels hoist sail to leave the port, *Daland's* vessel disappearing just as the *Dutchman* goes on board his ship.

After an introduction in which we hear a portion of the steersman's song, and also that phrase which denotes the appearance of the *Dutchman's* vessel in the harbor, the curtain rises upon a room in *Daland's* house. On the walls are pictures of vessels, charts, and on the farther wall the portrait of a pale man with a dark beard. *Senta*, leaning back in an arm-chair, is absorbed in dreamy contemplation of the portrait. Her old nurse, *Mary*, and her young friends, are sitting in various parts of the room, spinning. Here we have that charming musical number famous all the musical world over, perhaps largely through Liszt's admirable piano arrangement of it, the spinning chorus. For graceful and engaging beauty it cannot be surpassed, and may be cited as a striking instance of Wagner's gift of melody, should anybody at this late day be foolish enough to require proof of his genius in this respect. The girls tease *Senta* for gazing so dreamily at the portrait of the *Flying*

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Dutchman, and finally ask her if she will not sing his ballad.

This ballad is a masterpiece of composition, vocally and instrumentally, being melodious as well as descriptive. It begins with the storm music familiar from the overture, and with the weird measures of the Flying Dutchman's Motive, which sound like a voice calling in distress from across the sea.

Senta repeats the measures of this motive, and then we have the simple and effective phrases beginning, "A ship the restless sweeps." Throughout this portion of the ballad the orchestra depicts the surging and heaving of the ocean, *Senta's* voice ringing out dramatically above the accompaniment. She then tells how he can be delivered from his curse, this portion being set to the measures which were heard in the overture, *Senta* finally proclaiming in the rapturous phrases with which the overture concluded that she is the woman who will save him by being faithful to him unto death. The girls about her spring up in terror and *Eric*, who has just entered the door and heard her outcry, hastens to her side. He brings news of the arrival of the vessel, and *Mary* and the girls hasten forth to meet the sailors. *Senta* wishes to follow, but *Eric* restrains her and pleads his love for her in melodious measures. *Senta*, however, will not give him an answer at this time. He then tells her of a dream he had, in which he saw a weird vessel from which two men, one her father, the other a ghastly looking stranger, made their way.

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Her he saw going to the stranger and entreating him for his regard.

Senta, worked up to the highest pitch of excitement by *Eric's* words, now exclaims: "He seeks for me and I for him," and *Eric*, full of despair and horror, rushes away. *Senta*, after her outburst of excitement, remains again sunk in contemplation of the picture, softly repeating the measures of her romance. The door opens and the *Dutchman* and *Daland* appear. The *Dutchman* is the first to enter. *Senta* turns from the picture to him, and, uttering a loud cry of astonishment, remains standing as if transfixed without removing her eyes from the *Dutchman*. *Daland*, seeing that she does not greet him, comes up to her. She seizes his hand and after a hasty greeting asks him who the stranger is. *Daland* tells her, in measures of whose simple grace and beauty Mozart himself need not have been ashamed, of the stranger's request, and then leaves them alone. Then follows the duet, with its broad, smoothly flowing melody and its many phrases of dramatic power, in which *Senta* gives herself up unreservedly to the hero of her romantic attachment, *Daland* finally entering and adding his congratulations to their betrothal. This scene closes the act.

The music of it re-echoes through the introduction of the next act and goes over into a vigorous sailors' chorus and dance. The scene shows a bay with a rocky shore. *Daland's* house is in the foreground on one side, the background is occupied by his and the *Dutchman's* ship, which lie near one another. The

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Norwegian ship is lighted up, and all the sailors are making merry on the deck. In strange contrast is the *Flying Dutchman's* vessel. An unnatural darkness hangs over it, and the stillness of death reigns aboard. The sailors and the girls in their merry-making call loudly toward the Dutch ship to join them, but no reply is heard from the weird vessel. Finally the sailors call louder and louder and taunt the crew of the other ship. Then suddenly the sea, which has been quite calm, begins to rise. The storm wind whistles through the cordage of the "Flying Dutchman," and as dark bluish flames flare up in the rigging the weird crew show themselves, and sing a wild chorus, which strikes terror into all the merry-makers. The girls have fled, and the Norwegian sailors quit their deck, making the sign of the cross. The crew of the "Flying Dutchman" observing this, disappear with shrill laughter. Over their ship comes the stillness of death. Thick darkness is spread over it and the air and the sea become calm as before.

Senta now comes with trembling steps out of the house, followed by *Eric*. He pleads with her and entreats her to remember his love for her, and speaks also of the encouragement which she once gave him. The *Dutchman* has entered unperceived and has been listening. *Eric*, seeing him, at once recognizes the man of ghastly mien whom he saw in his vision. When the *Flying Dutchman* bids her farewell, because he deems himself abandoned, and *Senta* endeavors to follow him, *Eric* holds her and summons others to his aid. But, in spite of all resistance, *Senta* seeks to

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tear herself loose. Then it is that the *Flying Dutchman* proclaims who he is and puts to sea. *Senta*, however, freeing herself, rushes to a cliff overhanging the sea, and calling out

> Praise thou thine angel for what he saith;
> Here stand I faithful, yea, to death,

casts herself into the sea. Then occurs the concluding tableau, the work ending with the portion of the ballad which brought the overture and spinning scene to a close.

"TANNHÄUSER."

The scene of "Tannhäuser" is laid at and near the Wartburg, where, during the thirteenth century, the Landgraves of the Thuringian Valley held sway. They were lovers of art, especially of poetry and music, and at the Wartburg many peaceful contests between the famous Minnesingers took place. Near this castle rises the Venusberg. According to tradition the interior of this mountain was inhabited by Holda, the Goddess of Spring, who, however, in time became identified with the Goddess of Love. Her court was filled with nymphs and sirens, and it was her greatest joy to entice into the mountain the knights of the Wartburg and hold them captive to her beauty. Among those whom she has thus lured into the rosy recesses of the Venusberg is *Tannhäuser*. In spite of her beauty, however, he is weary of her charms and longs again for a glimpse of the world. He seems to have heard the tolling of bells and other earthly

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sounds, and these stimulate his yearning to be set free from the magic charms of the goddess.

In vain she prophesies evil to him should he return to the world, and calling out that his hope rests in the Virgin he tears himself away from her. The court of *Venus* disappears and in a moment we see *Tannhäuser* lying before a cross in a valley upon which the Wartburg peacefully looks down. Pilgrims on their way to Rome pass him by and *Tannhäuser* thinks of joining them in order that he may obtain forgiveness for his crime in allowing himself to be enticed into the Venusberg. But the *Landgrave* and a number of his Minnesingers on their return from the chase come upon him and recognizing him endeavor to persuade him to return to the Wartburg with them, but vainly, until one of them, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, tells him that since he has left the Wartburg a great sadness has come over the niece of the *Landgrave, Elizabeth*. It is evident that *Tannhäuser* has been in love with her, and that it is because of her beauty and virtue that he regrets so deeply having been lured into the Venusberg.

The *Landgrave*, feeling sure that *Tannhäuser* will win the prize at the contest of song soon to be held, offers the hand of his niece to the winner. The subject of the prize singing is love. The Minnesingers sing of the beauty of virtuous love, but *Tannhäuser*, suddenly remembering the seductive and magical beauties of the Venusberg, cannot control himself, and bursts out into a reckless hymn in praise of *Venus*. Horrified at his words, the knights draw their swords

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TANNHÄUSER.

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and would slay him but that *Elizabeth* throws herself between him and them. Crushed and penitent, *Tannhäuser* stands behind her, and the *Landgrave*, moved by her willingness to sacrifice herself for her sinful lover, announces that he will be allowed to join a second band of pilgrims who are going to Rome and to plead with the Pope for forgiveness.

Elizabeth prayerfully awaits his return ; but, as she is kneeling by the crucifix in front of the Wartburg, the pilgrims pass her by and in the band she does not see her lover. Slowly and sadly she returns to the castle to die. When the pilgrims' voices have died away, and *Elizabeth* has returned to the castle, leaving only *Wolfram*, who is also deeply enamored of her, upon the scene, *Tannhäuser* appears, weary and dejected. He has sought to obtain forgiveness in vain. The Pope had condemned him forever, proclaiming that no more than that his staff could put forth leaves could he expect forgiveness. He has come back to return again to the Venusberg. *Wolfram* seeks to retain him, but it is not until he mentions the name of *Elizabeth* that *Tannhäuser* is saved. A cortége approaches, and, as *Tannhäuser* recognizes the form of *Elizabeth* on the bier, he sinks down on her coffin and dies. Just then the second band of pilgrims arrive, bearing *Tannhäuser's* staff, which has put forth blossoms, thus showing that his sins have been forgiven.

From "The Flying Dutchman" to "Tannhäuser," dramatically and musically, is, if anything, a greater stride than from "Rienzi" to "The Flying Dutchman." In each of his successive works Wagner de-

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monstrates greater and deeper powers as a dramatic poet and composer. True it is that in nearly every one of them woman appears as the redeeming angel of sinful man, but the circumstances differ so that this beautiful tribute always interests us anew. The overture of the opera has long been a favorite piece on concert programs. Like that of "The Flying Dutchman" it is the story of the whole opera told in music. It is certainly one of the most brilliant and powerful pieces of orchestral music and its popularity is easily understood. It opens with the melody of the pilgrims' chorus, beginning softly as if coming from a distance and gradually increasing in power until it is heard in all its grandeur. At this point it is joined by a violently agitated accompaniment on the violins. This passage evoked great criticism when it was first produced and for many years thereafter. It was thought to mar the powerful beauty of the pilgrims' chorus. But without doing so at all it conveys additional dramatic meaning, for these agitated phrases depict the restlessness of the world as compared with the grateful tranquillity of religious faith as set forth in the melody of the pilgrims' chorus.

Having reached a climax this chorus gradually dies away, and suddenly, and with intense dramatic contrast, we have all the seductive spells of the Venusberg displayed before us—that is, musically displayed; but then the music is so wonderfully vivid, it depicts with such marvelous clearness the many colored alluring scene at the court of this unholy goddess, it gives vent so freely to the sinful excitement which pervades

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the Venusberg, that we actually seem to see what we hear. This passes over in turn to the outburst of passion in which *Tannhäuser* sings *Venus'* praise, and immediately after we have the boisterous and vigorous music which accompanies the threatening action of the *Landgrave* and Minnesingers when they draw their swords upon *Tannhäuser* in order to take vengeance upon him for his crimes. Upon these three episodes of the drama, which so characteristically give insight into its plot and action, the overture is based, and it very naturally concludes with the pilgrims' chorus, which seems to voice the final forgiveness of *Tannhäuser*.

The curtain then rises, disclosing all the seductive spells of the Venusberg. *Tannhäuser* lies in the arms of *Venus*, who reclines upon a flowery couch. Nymphs, sirens and satyrs are dancing about them and in the distance are grottoes alive with amorous figures. Various mythological amours, such as that of Leda and the swan, are supposed to be in progress, but fortunately at a mitigating distance. Much of the music familiar from the overture is heard during this scene, but it gains in effect from the distant voices of the sirens and, of course, by artistic scenery and grouping and well executed dances of the denizens of *Venus'* court. Very dramatic, too, is the scene between *Venus* and *Tannhäuser*, when the latter sings his hymn in her praise, but at the same time proclaims that he desires to return to the world. In alluring strains she endeavors to tempt him to remain with her, but when she discovers that he is bound

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upon going she vehemently warns him of the misfortunes which await him upon earth and prophesies that he will some day return to her and penitently ask to be taken back into her realm.

Dramatic and effective as this scene is in the original score, it has gained immensely in power by the additions which Wagner made for the productions in Paris. The overture does not, in this version, come to a formal close, but, after the manner of Wagner's later works, the transition is made directly from it to the scene of the Venusberg. The dances have been elaborated and laid out upon a more careful allegorical basis and the music of *Venus* has been greatly strengthened from a dramatic point of view, so that now the scene in which she pleads him to remain and afterward warns him against the sorrows to which he will be exposed are among the finest of Wagner's compositions, rivaling in dramatic power the ripest work in his music dramas.

Wagner's knowledge of the stage is shown in the wonderfully dramatic effect in the change of scene from the Venusberg to the landscape in the valley of the Wartburg. One moment we have the many colored glory of the court of the Goddess of Love, with all its dancing nymphs, sirens and satyrs, its beautiful grottoes and alluring groups; the next all this has disappeared, and from the heated atmosphere of *Venus'* unholy rites we are suddenly transported to a peaceful scene whose influence upon us is deepened by the crucifix in the foreground before which *Tannhäuser* kneels in penitence. The peacefulness of the

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VENUS.

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scene is greatly enhanced by the appearance upon a rocky eminence to the left of a young shepherd who pipes a pastoral strain, while in the background are heard the tinkling of bells, as though his sheep were there grazing upon some upland meadow. Before he has finished piping his lay the voices of the pilgrims are heard in the distance, their solemn measures being interrupted by little phrases piped by the *Shepherd*. As the pilgrims approach, the chorus becomes louder, and as they pass over the stage and bow before the crucifix, their praise swells into an eloquent psalm of devotion.

Tannhäuser is deeply affected and gives way to his feelings in a deep lament, against which are heard the voices of the pilgrims as they recede in the distance. This whole scene is one of marvelous beauty, the contrast between it and the preceding scene being enhanced by the religiously tranquil nature of the episodes it introduces and the music which accompanies them. Upon the peaceful scene the notes of hunting horns now break in, and gradually the *Landgrave* and his hunters gather about *Tannhäuser*. *Wolfram* recognizes him and tells the others who he is. They greet him in an expressive septette, and *Wolfram*, finding he is bent upon following the pilgrims to Rome, asks permission of the *Landgrave* to inform him of the impression which he seems to have made upon *Elizabeth*. This he does in a melodious solo, and *Tannhäuser*, overcome by his love for *Elizabeth*, consents to return to the halls which have missed him so long. Exclamations of joy greet his decision, and the act

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closes with an enthusiastic ensemble, which is a glorious piece of concerted music and never fails of brilliant effect when it is well executed, especially if the representative *Tannhäuser* has enough voice left to make himself heard above the others, which has not been the case with some of the veterans of Wagnerian campaigns who have been heard here. The accompanying scenic grouping must also be in keeping with the composer's purpose. The *Landgrave's* suite should gradually arrive, bearing the game which has been slain, and hunting hounds should be led on the stage. Finally the *Landgrave* and Minnesingers mount horses and ride away toward the castle.

The scene of the second act is laid in the singers' hall of the Wartburg. The introduction depicts *Elizabeth's* joy at *Tannhäuser's* return, and when the curtain rises she at once enters and joyfully greets the scenes of *Tannhäuser's* former triumphs in broadly expressive dramatic phrases, which, although they may not form a melody from the old point of view, may be said to be more dramatically melodious than a melody. At all events they are eloquent with joy. *Wolfram* then appears, conducting *Tannhäuser* to her. *Elizabeth* seems overjoyed to see him, but then checks herself, and her maidenly modesty, which veils her transport at meeting him, again finds expression in a number of hesitating but exceedingly beautiful phrases. She asks *Tannhäuser* where he has been, but he, of course, gives misleading answers. Finally, however, when he tells her she is the one who has attracted him back to the castle, their love finds ex-

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pression in a swift and rapidly flowing dramatic duet, which unfortunately is rarely given in its entirety, although as a glorious outburst of emotional music it certainly deserves to be heard in the exact form and length in which the composer wrote it.

There is then a scene of much tender feeling between the *Landgrave* and *Elizabeth*, in which the former tells her that he will offer her hand as prize to the singer whom she shall crown as winner. The first strains of the grand march are then heard. This is one of Wagner's most brilliant and effective orchestral and vocal pieces. Though in perfect march rhythm it is not intended that the guests who assemble at the Wartburg shall enter like a company of soldiers. On the contrary, they arrive in irregular detachments, stride across the floor, and make their obeisance in a perfectly natural manner. After an address by the *Landgrave*, which can hardly be called remarkably interesting, the singers draw lots to decide who among them shall begin. This prize singing, while it is of intense dramatic interest, is unfortunately of not so great musical value as the rest of the score, and hence this scene somewhat mars the effect of the act. In fact, unless a person is sufficiently German to understand every word that is sung, and to be in complete sympathy with the legend, it is decidedly tedious. What, however, redeems it from failure is a gradually growing dramatic excitement, as *Tannhäuser* places himself in opposition to the Minnesingers, an excitement which reaches its climax when, no longer able to restrain himself, he bursts

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forth into his hymn in praise of the unholy charms of *Venus*.

The women shout in horror and rush from the hall as if the very atmosphere were tainted by his presence, and the men, drawing their swords, rush upon him. This brings us to the great dramatic moment, when, with a shriek, *Elizabeth*, whom he has cruelly wronged, throws herself protectingly before him, and thus appears a second time as his saving angel. In short and excited phrases the men pour forth their wrath at *Tannhäuser's* crime, and he, realizing its enormity, seems crushed with a consciousness of his guilt. Of wondrous beauty is the septette, "An angel has from heaven descended," which rises to a magnificent climax and is one of the finest pieces of dramatic writing in Wagner's scores, although, of course, it is really difficult to praise any of Wagner's music at the expense of anything else he has written, or to compare any one of his scores with another, for, except in few instances, he always rises to his dramatic opportunity. The voices of young pilgrims are heard in the valley, and the *Landgrave* then announces the conditions upon which *Tannhäuser* can again obtain admission to the Minnesingers' circle at the Wartburg, and *Tannhäuser* joins the pilgrims on their way to Rome.

The third act displays once more the valley of the Wartburg, the same scene as that to which the Venusberg changed in the first act. *Elizabeth*, arrayed in white, is kneeling, in deep prayer, before the crucifix. At one side, and watching her tenderly, stands *Wol-*

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fram. After a sad recitative from *Wolfram*, the chorus of the returning pilgrims is heard in the distance. They sing the melody heard in the overture, and the same effect of gradual approach is produced by a magnificent crescendo as they reach and cross the scene. With almost piteous anxiety and grief *Elizabeth* scans them closely as they go by, to see if *Tannhäuser* be among them, and when the last one has passed and she realizes that he has not returned she sinks again upon her knees before the crucifix and sings the prayer, "Almighty Virgin, hear my sorrow," in whose music there is most beautifully combined the expression of poignant grief with trust in the will of the Almighty. As she rises and turns toward the castle, *Wolfram*, by his gesture, seems to ask her if he cannot accompany her, but she declines his offer and slowly goes her way up the mountain.

Meanwhile night has fallen upon the scene and the evening star glimmers softly above the castle. It is then that *Wolfram*, accompanying himself on the harp, intones the wondrously tender and beautiful song to the evening star, confessing therein his love for the saintly *Elizabeth*. Then *Tannhäuser*, dejected, footsore and weary, appears and in broken accents asks *Wolfram* to show him the way back to the Venusberg. *Wolfram* bids him stay his steps and persuades him to tell him the story of his pilgrimage. In fierce, dramatic accents *Tannhäuser* relates all that he has suffered on his way to Rome and the terrible judgment pronounced upon him by the Pope. This is a highly impressive episode, clearly foreshad-

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owing Wagner's dramatic use of musical recitation in his later music dramas, and only an artist of the highest rank can do justice to it.

Tannhäuser proclaims that, having lost all chance of salvation, he will once more give himself up to the delights of the Venusberg. A roseate light illumines the recesses of the mountain and the unholy company of the Venusberg are again seen, *Venus* stretching out her arms for *Tannhäuser*, to welcome him. *Wolfram* struggles with the unhappy minstrel, and at last, when *Tannhäuser* seems unable to resist *Venus'* enticing voice any longer, *Wolfram* conjures him by the memory of *Elizabeth*. Then *Venus* knows that all is lost. The light dies away and the magic charms of the Venusberg disappear. Amid tolling of bells and mournful voices a funeral procession comes down the mountain. Recognizing the features of *Elizabeth*, the dying *Tannhäuser* falls upon her corpse. The younger pilgrims arrive with the staff, which has again put forth leaves, and amid the hallelujahs of the pilgrims the opera closes.

Beside the character of *Elizabeth* that of *Wolfram* stands out for its tender, manly beauty. In love with *Elizabeth*, he is yet the means of bringing back her lover to her, and in the end saves that lover from perdition, so that they may be united in death.

"LOHENGRIN."

"Lohengrin" differs entirely in character from "Tannhäuser," the contrast being so great as to form an admirable example of Wagner's extraordinary ver-

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LOHENGRIN.

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satility. The fact is that Wagner appears to have become so saturated with the subject of his dramas that he seems to have transported himself to the very time in which his scenes are laid. So vividly does he portray the mythological occurrences told in "Lohengrin" that one can almost imagine he had been an eye witness of them. This capacity of artistic reproduction of a remote period would alone entitle him to rank as a great dramatist. But he has done much more; he has taken unpromising material, which to a writer of ordinary talent would be nothing at all, and converted it into a swiftly moving drama.

The material for "Lohengrin" was almost entirely lyric, but Wagner has made a stirring drama of it. Owing, however, to the character of the original, it is, while not at all lacking in strong dramatic situations, considerably more lyrical than "Tannhäuser." Consequently there is the same difference between the music of the two works, the harmonies of "Lohengrin" being more subtle and its melodiousness more subdued. It is, if anything, of a higher order than "Tannhäuser," and has, I believe, proved itself abroad to be the most popular of all his works, its popularity extending even to Italy. The music clothes the drama most admirably. The prelude at once places us in a proper mood for the story that is to unfold itself. It is based entirely upon one motive, and that a most beautiful one. Violins and flutes having with the most delicate intonation held long drawn out, ethereal chords, we hear on the violins, so divided as to heighten the delicacy of the effect, a motive which

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is intended to portray the sacred character of the Grail, the cup in which the Saviour's blood is supposed to have been caught as it flowed from the wound in His side while He was on the Cross.

Lohengrin is one of the knights of the Holy Grail who guard the sacred vessel. Although this motive alone occurs in the prelude, it never becomes monotonous, on account of the wonderful skill with which it is handled ; not that it is changed in form very frequently, but it works up through a magnificent crescendo to a tremendous climax with all the splendor of Wagner's instrumentation, to die away again to the ethereal whispers with which it began.

The story of "Lohengrin" is briefly as follows : The Hungarians have invaded Germany, and *Henry I.*, king of the Fatherland, visits Antwerp for the purpose of raising a force to combat them. He finds the country in a condition of anarchy. The dukedom is claimed by *Frederick*, who has married *Ortrud*, a daughter of the Prince of Friesland. The legitimate heir, *Gottfried*, has mysteriously disappeared, and his sister, *Elsa*, is charged by *Frederick* and *Ortrud* with having done away with him in order that she might obtain the sovereignty. The *King* summons her before him in order that the cause may be tried by the ordeal of single combat between *Frederick* and a champion who might be willing to appear for *Elsa*. None of the knights will defend her cause. She then describes a champion whose form has appeared to her in a vision, and she proclaims that he shall be her champion. Her pretense is derided by *Frederick* and his followers,

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who think that she is out of her mind, but after a triple summons by the *Herald* there is seen in the distance, on the river, a boat drawn by a swan, and in it a knight clad in silver armor. He comes to champion *Elsa's* cause, and before the combat betroths himself to her, but makes a strict condition that she shall never question him as to his name or birthplace, for if she should he would be obliged to return. She assents to the conditions, and the combat which ensues results in *Frederick's* ignominious defeat, and judgment of exile is pronounced on him.

Instead, however, of leaving the country he lingers in the neighborhood of Brabant, plotting with *Ortrud* how they may compass the ruin of *Lohengrin* and *Elsa*. *Ortrud* by her entreaties moves *Elsa* to pity, and persuades her to seek a reprieve for *Frederick*, at the same time, however, using every opportunity to instil doubts in *Elsa's* mind regarding her champion, and rousing her to such a pitch of nervous curiosity that she is on the point of asking him the forbidden question. After the bridal ceremonies, and in the bridal chamber, the distrust which *Ortrud* and *Frederick* have engendered in *Elsa's* mind so overcome her faith that she vehemently puts the forbidden question to her champion. Almost at the same moment *Frederick* and four of his followers force their way into the apartment, intending to take the knight's life. A single blow of *Lohengrin's* sword, however, stretches *Frederick* lifeless, and his followers bear his corpse away. Placing *Elsa* in the charge of her ladies in waiting, and ordering them to take her to

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the presence of the *King*, he repairs thither himself.

The Brabantian hosts are gathering, and he is expected to lead them to battle, but owing to *Elsa's* questions he is now obliged to disclose who he is and to take his departure. He proclaims that he is *Lohengrin*, son of *Parsifal*, Knight of the Holy Grail, and that he can linger no longer in Brabant, but must return to the place of his coming. The swan has once more appeared, drawing the boat down the river, and bidding *Elsa* farewell he steps into the little shell-like craft. But *Ortrud*, with malicious delight, declares that the swan is none other than *Elsa's* brother, whom she (*Ortrud*) bewitched into this form, and that he would have been changed back again to his human shape had it not been for *Elsa's* rashness. But *Lohengrin*, through his supernatural powers, is able to undo *Ortrud's* work, and at a word from him the swan disappears and *Gottfried* stands in its place. A dove now descends, and, hovering in front of the boat, draws it away with *Lohengrin*, while *Elsa* expires in her brother's arms.

The first scene of the first act opens with a vigorous syncopated phrase, during which the curtain rises, disclosing a meadow on the banks of the Scheldt. Under a huge oak sits *King Henry*, surrounded by the counts and nobles of Saxony. Opposite to them stand nobles of Brabant; at their front *Frederick*, with *Ortrud* by his side. The *Herald* steps from the party of the *King* to the centre of the stage, and after a vigorous call from four trumpets on the

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stage, summons the princes, nobles and freemen of Brabant to muster to the realm's defense. During this scene *Frederick* arraigns *Elsa* and the summons for her to appear is issued. While there is no melody, properly speaking, in this scene, it is strongly effective, the four trumpets on the stage, with their characteristic calls, adding greatly to the force and dignity of the music. Then, too, *Frederick's* excitement and the short passages for the chorus greatly heighten the dramatic action. At the very close of the scene the *Herald's* summons to *Elsa* resounds. Immediately a change comes over the music, for *Elsa* enters, remaining some time at the back of the stage, then coming slowly and very timidly forward, the ladies of her train remaining during the first part of the scene in the extreme background. Clad in white, she appears so lovely and innocent that the men look upon her and softly whisper their surprise at the charge.

Most beautiful is the accompaniment of this scene —soft and gentle and yet very plaintive—not, however, entirely hopeless, as if *Elsa*, being conscious of her innocence, did not despair of her fate. It is chiefly orchestrated for the wood wind instruments, whose soft, smooth, round tones are exactly suited to give expression to the phrases which Wagner has assigned to them. In answer to the *King's* questions *Elsa* inclines her head, and seems with a gesture to say that the accusation is so vile that she can make no answer. Finally she tells the story of her dream in a beautiful melody, while she looks tranquilly before her. Then we hear softly whispered by the violins the

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Motive of the Grail, and in dreamy rapture she tells of the knight of glorious mien on whom she gazed. This passage introduces an animated phrase, which occurs again when the knight arrives in answer to her prayers, and is also heard later in the drama. It passes over into a very beautiful melody, broad and flowing, which is subsequently taken up by the chorus. *Frederick*, however, announces his willingness to back his accusation by the ordeal of single combat, and the *King*, turning to *Elsa*, requests her to name her champion. She then proclaims that the knight whom she has seen in her dream shall champion her, and to him whom Heaven shall send she offers her hand in marriage.

The *Herald* steps forth with the four trumpeters, whom he places toward the four points of the compass, the *King* having previously drawn his sword and thrust it into the earth before him. The *Herald* summons *Elsa's* champion to appear, but there is deep silence. Again the trumpets ring out, and now, when there is still no answer, *Elsa*, surrounded by her maids, falls upon her knees in fervent prayer. She has hardly finished before exclamations of wonder from the nobles standing nearest the water call attention to the skiff drawn by a swan which is approaching from a distance. As it draws nearer and nearer the excitement of the beholders finds vent in a wonderfully dramatic chorus composed of detached phrases, which finds, at last, its climax in an outburst of joy as the skiff reaches the bank. *Elsa*, with transported countenance, has remained upon her knees,

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but now she rises and turns, and, seeing *Lohengrin*, greets him with an exclamation of joy. The excitement gradually gives way to rapt expectancy as *Lohengrin* moves to step out of the skiff. The climax dies away with those long drawn chords which were heard in the prelude, and these are followed by the Grail Motive, which introduces the exquisite farewell to the swan.

The succeeding chorus well expresses the awe which has overcome the assembly at sight of this supernatural champion. *Lohengrin* steps out of his skiff and, making an obeisance to the *King*, greets him. He then converses with *Elsa*, his words being chiefly accompanied by the music familiar from the prelude, he finally putting to her the conditions under which he will champion her cause. Here occurs a phrase of threatful burden, the Motive of Warning, which appears significantly in later scenes. *Elsa* gives herself up entirely to her champion, and he, raising her to his heart, exclaims in a brief but impassioned musical phrase, "*Elsa*, I worship thee!" The chorus expressive of awe is repeated, and the nobles who stand forth respectively for *Lohengrin* and *Frederick* cross the stage with solemn strides and measure the ground for the combat.

When the six have formed a complete circle, and the *Herald* has warned all not to interfere with the fight, the *King* intones the prayer, which forms one of the most superb numbers in this work. Beginning as a solo for the *King*, it is continued as a quintette, *Elsa*, *Ortrud*, *Lohengrin* and *Frederick* joining in it,

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and then suddenly receives a magnificent impetus from the full chorus, reaching an impassioned and stupendous climax. The *King* draws his sword out of the ground and strikes it three times on the shield that hangs on the oak. With the first stroke *Lohengrin* and *Frederick* step into the circle. With the second they advance their shields and draw; with the third the combat begins. It is brief and ends with *Frederick's* ignominious defeat, *Lohengrin*, out of pity, sparing his life. The beholders rush to the centre with glad acclamations to hail *Lohengrin* as the victor, and *Elsa* hastens to his side and sings a pæan of joy, which is finally taken up by the chorus and forms a grand finale to this highly dramatic act.

The second act opens with a sombre phrase, interrupted with dramatic significance by the Motive of Warning. The curtain discloses the fortress of Antwerp. At the back is the palace; in the foreground the dwelling of the women; to the right the minster. It is night. *Ortrud* and *Frederick*, both in sombre garments, are seated on the steps of the minster. *Frederick* is lost in gloomy thought. *Ortrud* gazes fixedly at the windows of the palace, through which the light is streaming. Sounds of revelry are heard from within.

Frederick arouses himself and bids *Ortrud* follow him in flight; but *Ortrud* demurs that she is held to the spot by a desire to wreak vengeance upon *Elsa* and her knight. Then *Frederick* in a paroxysm of grief and rage curses his fate in wrathful measures. As he throws himself upon the ground,

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overcome with anger, festive sounds from the palace are heard again.

Ortrud, with almost fiendish tranquillity, derides him for this violent outburst of temper, and then, with devilish calmness, unfolds to him the plan by which she intends to put an end to the happiness of *Elsa* and her champion. In a weird and sombre incantation, one of the most satanically dramatic passages Wagner has written, they invoke the powers of evil to their aid. This ends the scene between *Ortrud* and *Frederick*, which, at the time the opera was brought out, and even now, is still criticised on account of its unmelodiousness and its length. While perhaps it is, for dramatic purposes, somewhat too long, because what is told therein might be conveyed to the audience in a shorter scene—in fact, the score is now subjected to considerable cutting without at all interfering with the clearness of the story—the episode is undoubtedly one of the most sombrely powerful passages in the whole work. But one can readily understand that when the work was first brought out, some forty years ago, before the operatic public had been fed on leading motives, it must have found this scene pretty tough and indigestible.

After the invocation of the powers of evil the door which leads onto the balcony of the women's apartment opens, and *Elsa* appears in white garments. She steps forward to the parapet and leaning her head upon her hands sings a sweetly melodious strain of gratitude for the sending of her champion. As her voice dies away, *Frederick* disappears to a hiding place,

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and *Ortrud* calls in a plaintive voice, "Elsa!" Moved to pity, *Elsa* hastens down to meet her, and now, while simulating humility, *Frederick's* wife pours doubts regarding her champion into *Elsa's* mind, at the same time moving her to ask for a reprieve for *Frederick*. The whole closes with a beautiful duet, which is repeated by the orchestra as *Ortrud* is conducted by *Elsa* into the apartment. *Frederick* appears for a moment and hurls his malediction after them.

Trumpets, seemingly sounding from turrets in various parts of the city, now announce the break of day, and while the warders descend and unlock the gates, servitors enter from various directions, salute each other and proceed quietly on their several ways. Some draw water at the well, knock at the entrance of the palace and are admitted. The royal trumpeters issue forth from the palace gates and blow the summons. Nobles and retainers enter and sing a very spirited chorus, one of the best things in the work, but usually pretty badly sung, and therefore rarely achieving its full effect. The *Herald*, whose frequency is, by the way, somewhat against him, then announces the decree of exile which has been passed on *Frederick*, and proclaims that *Lohengrin* is to lead the host into battle. This is at first hailed with exclamations of joy, but *Frederick* appears and mingling with the nobles seems to instil them with distrust of their new captain, and they finally shelter him near the steps of the minster. The well-known bridal procession is now intoned by the orchestra, and a long train of ladies issue forth onto the balcony, de-

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scend, pass before the palace, return to the front, and then ascend the steps of the minster, where they remain standing. *Elsa* then appears amid the train, the nobles deferentially baring their heads. *Elsa* reaches the steps of the palace and there she remains standing a while, the chorus singing a song of joy to the melody of the bridal procession. As she places her foot on the second step of the minster *Ortrud*, who until now has been behind the train, hastens forward and savagely confronts her, declaring that she shall have precedence, as *Elsa* cannot even name her champion. She plays upon this inability of *Elsa* to discover the name and race of the knight who has aided her, and *Elsa* is visibly affected.

At this moment, amid flourish of trumpets and acclamations, the *King* appears with *Lohengrin*, and *Elsa* throws herself into his arms. *Lohengrin*, *Elsa* and the *King* turn toward the minster, but here *Frederick* confronts them, charging *Lohengrin* with sorcery, and asking who he is and whence he came, again instilling *Elsa's* mind with doubts. *Lohengrin* turns toward *Elsa*, sees that her bosom is heaving convulsively and that she seems under great emotion. The Motive of Warning rings out again as he chides her; but after an excited scene the men gather around *Lohengrin* and grasp his hand in token of allegiance. Meanwhile *Frederick* whispers warnings to *Elsa*, until *Lohengrin*, stepping hastily forward bids him and *Ortrud* begone. The bridal procession then proceeds and enters the minster. At the very last moment, before *Elsa* passes through

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its entrance, she beholds *Ortrud*, who lifts an arm against her with an expression of warning and triumph, and the bride turns away her face in terror.

The third act opens with the brilliant introduction so familiar from concert performances even before the opera itself was ever heard here, and this is followed by the even more famous bridal chorus, which now forms a companion piece to Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" at nearly every wedding ceremony, so that there is probably no tune to whose strains so many people are made happy or miserable. The train which conducted *Lohengrin* and *Elsa* into the bridal chamber having taken its departure we have the exquisite love duet, one of the sweetest and tenderest passages of which the lyric stage can boast. A very beautiful episode is that in which *Lohengrin* points to the open casement, to the flowery close below, softly illumed by the moon, and sings to an accompaniment of what might be called musical moonbeams, "Say, dost thou breathe the incense sweet of flowers?" But in spite of the tender warning which he conveys to her, she begins questioning him. He turns toward her and in a passionate phrase begs her to trust him and abide with him in loving faith; but his words are vain. She dreads that the memory of the delightful place from which he came will wean him from her. In a wild vision she exclaims that she sees the swan approaching to bear him away from her, and then she puts to him the forbidden questions.

This is followed by the attack of *Frederick* and his death, and then there is a dramatic silence during

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which *Elsa* sinks on *Lohengrin's* breast and faints. When I say silence I do not mean that there is a total cessation of sound, for silence can be more impressively expressed in music than by actual silence itself. It is done in this case by long drawn out chords followed by faint taps on the tympani. *Lohengrin* bends down to *Elsa*, raises her and gently places her on a couch, while echoes of the love duet add to the mournfulness of the scene. He orders the four nobles to bear away *Frederick's* corpse and then signals to the ladies in waiting who are to convey *Elsa* to the king. The scene closes with the Motive of Warning, which resounds with dread power.

A quick change of scene is supposed to be made, but, as a rule, it takes so long that the third act is virtually given in two acts. The next scene opens with a brilliant march, during which the counts of Brabant enter on horseback from various directions, followed by their vassals. There is a vigorous address by the *King;* then *Elsa* and afterward *Lohengrin* enter. *Lohengrin* uncovers the corpse of *Frederick*, which is borne in, and explains how he slew him, and tells that he is forced to disclose whence he came, and then to take leave. *Lohengrin's* narrative is beautifully set to music familiar from the prelude; but when he proclaims his name we hear the same measures which *Elsa* sang in the second part of her dream in the first act. Very beautiful and tender is the music which he sings when he hands *Elsa* his horn, his sword and his ring to give to her brother, should he return, and also his greeting to the swan when it

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comes to bear him back. After the episodes fully related in the synopsis of the plot, the work is brought to a close with a repetition of the music of the second portion of *Elsa's* dream, followed by a superb climax with the Motive of the Grail.

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THE DEATH PROPHECY.

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WAGNER'S LIFE AND WORKS.

VOL. II. { NIBELUNG, * * * *
TRISTAN, * * * *
MASTERSINGERS, *
PARSIFAL. * * * * }

BY

GUSTAV KOBBÉ.

NEW YORK:
G. SCHIRMER.
1890.

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Mus 364.1.813

Summer Song

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— TO —

CAROLYN WHEELER KOBBÉ.

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LEADING MOTIVES.

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INTRODUCTION.

The "Ring of the Nibelung" consists of four music-dramas—"Rhinegold," the "Valkyr," "Siegfried" and the "Dusk of the Gods." The "books" of these were written in inverse order. Wagner made a dramatic sketch of the Nibelung myth as early as the autumn of 1848 and between then and the autumn of 1850 he wrote the "Death of Siegfried." This subsequently became the "Dusk of the Gods." Meanwhile Wagner's ideas as to the proper treatment of the myth seem to have undergone a change. "Siegfried's Death" ended simply dramatically, *Brünnhilde* leading *Siegfried* to Valhall. Afterwards Wagner evidently conceived the purpose of connecting the final catastrophe of his Trilogy with the Dusk of the Gods, or end of all things, in Northern mythology, and of embodying a profound truth in the action of the music-dramas. This metaphysical significance of the work is believed to be sufficiently explained in the brief synopsis of the plot of the Trilogy and in the descriptive musical and dramatic analysis below.

In the autumn of 1850 when Wagner was on the point of sketching out the music of "Siegfried's Death," he recognized that he must lead up to it with another drama, and "Young Siegfried," afterwards "Siegfried," was the result. This in turn he found incomplete, and finally decided to supplement it with the "Valkyr" and "Rhinegold." This backward *modus operandi* he explained to Liszt in a characteristic letter dated Albisbrunn, November 20, 1851.

"Rhinegold" was produced in Munich, at the *Hoftheater*

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September 22, 1869; the "Valkyr," on the same stage, June 26, 1870. "Siegfried" and the "Dusk of the Gods" were not performed until 1876, when they were produced at Bayreuth.

Of the principal characters in the "Ring of the Nibelung," *Alberich*, the Nibelung, and *Wotan*, the chief of the gods, are symbolic of greed for wealth and power. This lust leads *Alberich* to renounce love—the most sacred of emotions—in order that he may rob the Rhine-daughters of the Rhinegold and forge from it the ring which is to make him all-powerful. *Wotan* by strategy obtains the ring, but, instead of returning it to the Rhine-daughters, he gives it to the giants, *Fafner* and *Fasolt* as ransom for *Freia*, the goddess of youth and beauty, whom he had promised to the giants as a reward for building Walhalla. *Alberich* has cursed the ring and all into whose possession it may come. The giants no sooner obtain it than they fall to quarreling over it and *Fafner* slays *Fasolt* and then retires to a cave in the heart of a forest where, in the form of a dragon, he guards the ring and the rest of the treasure which *Wotan* wrested from Alberich and also gave to the giants as ransom for Freia. This treasure includes the tarn-helmet, a helmet made of Rhinegold, the wearer of which can assume any guise.

Wotan having witnessed the slaying of *Fasolt*, is filled with dread lest the curse of *Alberich* be visited upon the gods. To defend Valhalla against the assaults of *Alberich* and the host of Nibelungs, he begets in union with *Erda*, the goddess of wisdom, the Valkyrs (chief among them *Brünnhilde*) who course through the air on superb chargers and bear the bodies of departed heroes to Valhalla, where they revive and aid the gods in warding off the attacks of the Nibelungs. But it is also necessary that the

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curse-laden ring should be wrested from *Fafner* and restored through purely unselfish motives to the Rhine-daughters, and the curse thus lifted from the race of the gods. None of the gods can do this because the motives would not be entirely unselfish. Hence, *Wotan*, for a time, casts off his divinity, and in disguise as Wälse, begets in union with a human woman the Wälsung twins, *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. *Siegmund* he hopes will be the hero who will slay *Fafner* and restore the ring to the Rhine-daughters. To nerve him for this task, *Wotan* surrounds the Wälsungs with numerous hardships. *Sieglinde* is forced to become the wife of her robber *Hunding*. *Siegmund*, storm-driven, seeks shelter in *Hunding's* hut, where he and his sister, recognizing one another, form an incestuous union and escape. *Hunding* overtakes them and *Wotan*, as *Siegmund* has been guilty of a crime against the marriage vow, is obliged, at the request of his spouse *Fricka*, the Juno of Northern mythology, to give victory to *Hunding*. *Brünnhilde*, contrary to *Wotan's* command, takes pity on *Siegmund* and seeks to shield him against *Hunding*. For this *Wotan* causes her to fall into a profound slumber. The hero who will penetrate the barrier of fire with which *Wotan* has surrounded the rock upon which she slumbers can claim her as his bride.

After *Siegmund's* death *Sieglinde* gives birth to *Siegfried*, a son of their incestuous union, who is reared by one of the Nibelungs, *Mime*, in the forest where *Fafner* guards the Nibelung treasure. *Mime* is seeking to weld the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword (Nothung or Needful) in order that *Siegfried* may slay *Fafner*, *Mime* hoping to then possess himself of the treasure. But he cannot weld the sword. At last *Siegfried*, learning that it was his father's weapon, welds the pieces and slays *Fafner*. His lips having come in con-

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tact with his bloody fingers, he is, through the magic power of the dragon's blood, enabled to understand the language of the birds, and a little feathery songster warns him of *Mime's* treachery. *Siegfried* slays the Nibelung and is then guided to the fiery barrier around the Valkyr rock. Penetrating this, he comes upon *Brünnhilde*, and, enraptured with her beauty, he awakens her and claims her as his bride, and she, the virgin pride of the goddess, yielding to the love of the woman, gives herself up to him. He plights his troth with the curse-laden ring which he has wrested from *Fafner*.

Siegfried goes forth in quest of adventure. On the Rhine lives the Gibichung *Gunther*, his sister *Gutrune* and their half-brother *Hagen*, the son of the Nibelung *Alberich*. *Hagen*, knowing of *Siegfried's* coming, plans his destruction in order to regain the ring for the Nibelungs. Therefore, craftily concealing *Brünnhilde's* and *Siegfried's* relations from *Gunther* he incites a longing in the latter to possess *Brünnhilde* as his bride. Carrying out a plot evolved by *Hagen*, *Gutrune* on *Siegfried's* arrival presents to him a drinking horn filled with a love-potion. *Siegfried* drinks, forgets *Brünnhilde*, and becoming enamored of *Gutrune* asks her in marriage of *Gunther*. The latter consents provided *Siegfried* will disguise himself in the Tarn-helmet as *Gunther* and lead *Brünnhilde* to him as bride. *Siegfried* readily agrees, and in the guise of *Gunther* overcomes *Brünnhilde* and delivers her to the Gibichung. But *Brünnhilde*, recognizing on *Siegfried* the ring which her conqueror had drawn from her finger, accuses him of treachery in delivering her, his own bride, to *Gunther*. The latter, unmasked and also suspicious of *Siegfried*, conspires with *Hagen* and *Brünnhilde*, who, knowing naught of the love-potion, is roused to a frenzy of hate and jealousy by *Siegfried's*

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treachery, to compass the young hero's death. *Hagen* slays *Siegfried* during a hunt, and then in a quarrel with *Gunther* over the ring also kills the Gibichung. Meanwhile *Brünnhilde* has learned through the Rhine-daughters of the treachery of which she and *Siegfried* have been the victims. All her jealous hatred of *Siegfried* yields to her old love for him and a passionate yearning to join him in death. She draws the ring from his finger and throws upon the pyre the torch which ignites it. Then, mounting her steed, she plunges into the flames. One of the Rhine-daughters seizes the curse-laden ring. *Hagen* rushes into the flooding Rhine hoping to regain it, but the other Rhine-daughters grasp him and draw him down into the flood. Not only the flames of the pyre, but a glow which pervades the whole horizon illumines the scene. It is Walhalla being consumed by fire. Through love—the very emotion *Alberich* renounced in order to gain wealth and power—*Brünnhilde* has caused the old order of things to pass away and a new and better era to dawn.

The sum of all that has been written concerning the book of "The Ring of the Nibelung" is probably larger than the sum of all that has been written concerning the librettos used by all other composers in their aggregate. What can be said of the ordinary opera libretto beyond Voltaire's remark that "what is too stupid to be spoken is sung?" But "The Ring of the Nibelung" produced vehement discussion. It was attacked and defended, praised and ridiculed, extolled and condemned, And it survived all the discussion it called forth. It was the grandest fact in Wagner's career that he always triumphed. He threw his lance into the midst of his enemies and fought his way up to it. No matter how much opposition his music-dramas

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excited, they found their way into the repertoire of the leading opera houses of Germany and have since their production proved the most popular musico-dramatic works of the time.

It was contended on many sides that a book like "The Ring of the Nibelung" could not be set to music. Certainly it could not be after the fashion of an ordinary opera. Perhaps people were so accustomed to the books of nonsense which figured as opera librettos that they thought "The Ring of the Nibelung" was so great a work that its action and climaxes were beyond the scope of musical expression. For such, Wagner has placed music on a higher level. He has shown that music makes a great drama greater.

One of the most remarkable features of Wagner's works is the author's absorption of the traits of the times in which he wrote. He seems to have gone back to the very time in which the scene of the music-drama is laid and to have himself lived through the events in his plot. Hans Sachs could not have left a more faithful portrayal of life in the Nuremberg of his day than Wagner has given us in "Die Meistersinger." In "The Ring of the Nibelung" he has done more—he has absorbed an imaginary epoch; lived over the days of gods and demigods; infused life into mythological figures. "The Rhinegold," which is full of varied interest from its first note to its last, deals entirely with beings of mythology. They are presented true to life —if that expression may be used in connection with beings that never lived—that is to say, they are so vividly drawn that we forget such beings never lived, and take as much interest in their doings and sayings as if they were lifelike reproductions of historical characters. Was there ever a love scene more thrilling than that between *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde?* It represents the gradations of the love of two

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souls from its first awakening to its rapturous greeting in full self-consciousness. No one stops to think during that impassioned scene that the close relationship between *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* would in these days have been a bar to their legal union. For all we know, in those moments when the impassioned music of that scene whirls us away in its resistless current, not a drop of related blood courses through their veins. This is a sufficient answer to the sermons that have been preached against the immorality of this scene. Moreover, as it is by no means dramatically necessary that *Siegmund* and *Siegliende* should be brother and sister, those who hold mythological beings to as strict a moral accountability as they do the people of to-day can imagine that the lovers were strangers or second cousins or anything else—only let them stop preaching sermons. It has been said that we could not be interested in mythological beings—that "The Ring of the Nibelung" lacked human interest. In reply, I say that wonderful as is the first act of "The Valkyr," there is nothing in it to compare in wild and lofty beauty with the last act of that music-drama—especially the scene between *Brünnhilde* and *Wotan*.

That there are faults of dramatic construction in "The Ring of the Nibelungen" I admit. I have not hesitated to point them out. But there are faults of construction in Shakespeare. What would be the critical verdict if "Hamlet" were now to have its first performance in the exact form in which Shakespeare left it? With all its faults of dramatic construction "The Ring of the Nibelung" is a remarkable drama, full of life and action and logically developed, the events leading up to superb climaxes. Wagner was doubly inspired. He was both a great dramatist and a great musician.

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The chief faults of dramatic construction of which Wagner was guilty in "The Ring of the Nibelung" are certain unduly prolonged scenes which are merely episodical—that is unnecessary to the development of the plot so that they delay the action and weary the audience to a point which endangers the success of the really sublime portions of the score. Such are the scenes between *Wotan* and *Fricka* and *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde* in the second act of the "Valkyr"; between *Wotan* and *Mime* in the first act of "Siegfried"; between *Wotan* and *Erda* in the third act of "Siegfried"; and the *Norn* scene in the "Dusk of the Gods." In several of these scenes there is a great amount of narrative, the story of events with which we have become familiar being retold in detail although some incidents which connect the plot of the particular music-drama with that of the preceding one are also related. But, as narrative on the stage makes little impression, and, when it is sung perhaps none at all, because it cannot be well understood, it would seem as if prefaces to the libretti could have taken the place of these narratives. Certain it is that these long drawn-out scenes did more to retard the popular recognition of Wagner's genius than the activity of hostile critics and musicians. Still, it should be remembered that nowhere, except at Bayreuth, are these music-dramas given as they should be, and that they were composed for performance under the ideal circumstances which prevail there. At Bayreuth the performances begin in the afternoon and there are long waits between the acts, during which you can refresh yourself by a stroll or by the more mundane pleasures of the table. Then, after an hour's relaxation of the mind and of the sense of hearing, you are ready to hear another act. Under these agreeable conditions the faults of dramatic construction are not fatigueing because one

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remains sufficiently fresh to enjoy the music of the dramatically faulty scenes. Even poor old *Wotan's* frequent outbursts of grief are not nearly so tedious as they are when the "Ring" is performed elsewhere than at Bayreuth.

Wotan, except in the noble scene with *Brünnhilde* in the finale of "The Valkyr," is a bore. He is Wagner's one failure—and Wagner's failure was on as colossal a scale as his successes were. *Wotan* is the chief of the gods, a race marked out by fate for annihilation. Walking in the shadow of impending destruction he would, one might suppose, bear himself with a certain tragic dignity. Instead of this, however, he is constantly bemoaning his fate and hence strikes one as contemptible rather than as tragic. Moreover, even if his outbursts of grief were tragic instead of ridiculous and wearisome, we could hardly clothe with god-like dignity a character who pursues the female sex—divine, semi-divine and purely human—with the persistency of a mythological Mormon and has reared a numerous family each member of which would probably find considerable difficulty in identifying his or her mother.

But if *Wotan* is a failure, *Brünnhilde* is on the other hand Wagner's noblest creation. She takes upon herself the sins of the gods and the Nibelungs and by her expiation frees the world from the curse of lust for wealth and power. She is a perfect dramatic incarnation of the profound and beautiful metaphysical argument upon which the plot of the "Ring of the Nibelung" is based.

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A RHINE-DAUGHTER.

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"THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG."

"THE RHINEGOLD."

N "The Rhinegold" we meet with supernatural beings of German mythology—the Rhine-daughters *Woglinde*, *Wellgunde* and *Flosshilde*, whose duty it is to guard the precious Rhinegold; *Wotan*, the chief of the Gods; his spouse *Fricka*; *Loge*, the God of Fire (the diplomat of Walhalla); *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth and Beauty; her brothers *Donner* and *Froh*; *Erda*, the all-wise woman; the giants *Fafner* and *Fasolt*; *Alberich* and *Mime* of the race of Nibelungs, cunning, treacherous gnomes who dwell in Nibelheim in the bowels of the earth.

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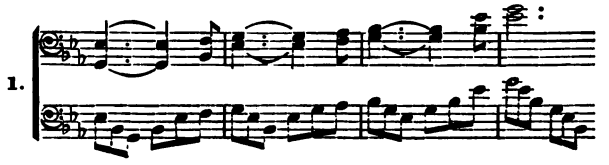
The first scene of "Rhinegold" is laid on the Rhine, where the Rhinedaughters guard the Rhinegold.

The work opens with a wonderfully descriptive prelude, which depicts with marvelous art (marvelous because so simple) the transition from the quietude of the water-depths to the wavy life of the Rhinedaughters. The double basses intone E flat. Only this note is heard during four bars. Then three contra bassoons add a B flat. The chord, thus formed, sounds until the 136th bar. With the sixteenth bar there flows over this seemingly immovable triad, as the current of a river flows over its immovable bed, the MOTIVE OF THE RHINE:



A horn intones this Motive. Then one horn after another takes it up until its wave-like tones are heard on the eight horns. On the flowing accompaniment of the 'cellos the Motive is carried to the woodwind. It rises higher and higher, the other strings successively joining in the accompaniment, which now flows on in gentle undulations until the Motive is heard on the high notes of the woodwind, while the violins have joined in the accompaniment. When the theme thus seems to have stirred the waters from their depth to their surface the curtain rises.

The scene shows the bed and flowing waters of the Rhine, the light of day reaching the depths only as

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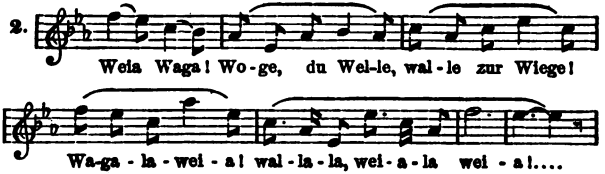
a greenish twilight. The current flows on over rugged rocks and through dark chasms.

Woglinde is circling gracefully around the central ridge of rock. To an accompaniment as wavy as the waters through which she swims, she sings the much-discussed

Weia! Waga! Woge, du Welle,
Walle zur Wiege! Wagala weia!
Wallala, Weiala weia!

Some of these words belong to what may be termed the language of the Rhinedaughters. Looked at in print they seem odd, perhaps even ridiculous. When, however, they are sung to the melody of the Rhinedaughters they have a wavy grace which is simply entrancing. The Motive to which they are sung (Kleinmichel piano score with words, page 5, line 4; see also page 25, line 1), I call the "Motive of the Rhinedaughters."



In wavy sport the Rhinedaughters dart from cliff to cliff. Meanwhile *Alberich* has clambered from the depths up to one of the cliffs, and watches, while standing in its shadow, the gambols of the Rhinedaughters. As he speaks to them there is a momentary harshness in the music, whose flowing rhythm is broken (page 8, line 3). Characteristically descriptive of his discomfiture is the music when, in futile endeavors to clamber up to them,

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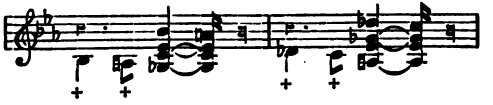
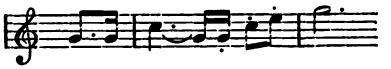
he inveighs against the "slippery slime" which causes him to lose his foothold (page 12, line 2).

When after *Woglinde*, *Wellgunde* and *Flosshilde* have in turn gamboled almost within his reach, only to dart away again, he curses his own weakness, you hear the MOTIVE OF THE NIBELUNGS' SERVITUDE, (page 24, line 1, bars 3 and 4).

3. 

Swimming high above him the Rhinedaughters incite him with gleeful cries to chase them. *Alberich* tries to ascend, but always slips and falls back. Finally, beside himself with rage, he threatens them with clenched fist. The music accompanying this threat is in the typical rhythm of the Nibelung Motive (see No. 18).

Alberich's gaze is attracted and held by a glow which suddenly pervades the waves above him and increases until from the highest point of the central cliff a bright, golden ray shoots through the water. Amid the shimmering accompaniment of the violins is heard on the horn the RHINEGOLD MOTIVE (page 31, line 1).

4. 

With shouts of triumph the Rhinedaughters swim around the rock. Their cry, "Rhinegold," is a characteristic motive, heard again later in the cycle, and the new accompanying figure on the violins may also be noted, as later on further reference to it will be neces-

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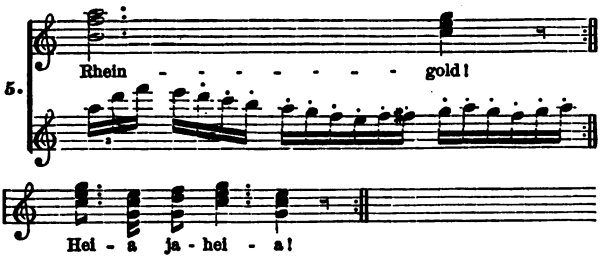
sary. THE RHINEDAUGHTERS' SHOUT OF TRIUMPH and the accompaniment to it are as follows:



As the river glitters with golden light the Rhinegold Motive rings out brilliantly on the trumpet. The Nibelung is fascinated by the sheen. The Rhinedaughters gossip with one another, and *Alberich* thus learns that the light is that of the Rhinegold, and that whoever shapeth a ring from this gold will become invested with great power. Then is heard THE RING MOTIVE page 41, line 3) in the woodwind:

When *Flosshilde* bids her sisters cease their prattle, lest some sinister foe should overhear them, the music which accompanied *Alberich's* threat in the typical Nibelung rhythm reappears for an instant (page 42, line 3).

Wellgunde and *Woglinde* ridicule their sister's anxiety, saying that no one would care to filch the gold, because it would give power only to him who abjures or renounces love. The darkly prophetic MOTIVE OF THE

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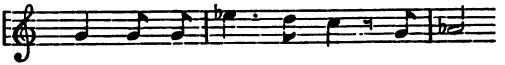
RENUNCIATION OF LOVE is heard here (page 43, line 1). It is sung by *Woglinde*:

7. 

As *Alberich* reflects on the words of the Rhinedaughters (page 47, line 3) the Ring Motive occurs both in voice and orchestra in mysterious pianissimo (like an echo of *Alberich's* sinister thoughts), and is followed by the Motive of Renunciation. Then is heard the sharp, decisive rhythm of the Nibelung Motive (see No. 18), and *Alberich* fiercely springs over to the central rock. The Rhinedaughters scream and dart away in different directions. The threatening measures of the Nibelung—this time loud and relentless—and *Alberich* has reached the summit of the highest cliff.

"Hark, ye floods! Love I renounce forever!" he cries, and amid the crash of the Rhinegold Motive he seizes the gold and disappears in the depths. With screams of terror the Rhinedaughters dive after the robber through the darkened water, guided by *Alberich's* shrill, mocking laugh. Waters and rocks sink; as they disappear, the billowy accompaniment sinks lower and lower in the orchestra. Above it rises once more the Motive of Renunciation (page 53, line 5). The Ring Motive is heard, and then as the waves change into nebulous clouds the billowy accompaniment rises pianissimo until, with a repetition of the Ring Motive, the action passes to the second scene. One crime has already been committed —the theft of the Rhinegold by *Alberich*. How that crime and the ring which he shapes from the gold inspire other crimes is told in the course of the following scenes of "Rhinegold." Hence the significance of the

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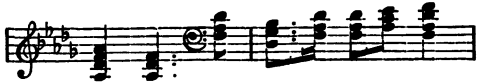
Ring Motive as a connecting link between the first and second scenes.

SCENE II.

The dawn illumines a castle with glittering turrets on a rocky height at the back. Through a deep valley between this and the foreground the Rhine flows.

With the opening of the second scene the stately WALHALLA MOTIVE is heard:

8. 

This is a motive of superb beauty. It greets us again and again in "Rhinegold" and frequently in the later music-dramas of the cycle. Yet, often as it occurs, one hears it with ever-growing admiration. Walhalla is the dwelling of gods and heroes and its motive is divinely and heroically beautiful. Though it is essentially broad and stately it often assumes a tender mood, like the chivalric gentleness which every true hero feels toward woman. Thus it is at the opening of the second scene, for here this motive, which when played forte or fortissimo is one of the stateliest of musical inspirations, is marked *piano* and *molto dolce*. In crescendo and decrescendo it rises and falls, as rises and falls with each breath the bosom of the beautiful *Fricka*, who slumbers at *Wotan's* side.

As *Fricka* awakens her eyes fall on the castle. In her surprise she calls to her spouse. *Wotan* dreams on, the Ring Motive, and later the Walhalla Motive, being heard in the orchestra, for with the ring *Wotan* is finally to compensate the Giants for building Walhalla. As he opens his eyes and sees the castle you hear (page 56,

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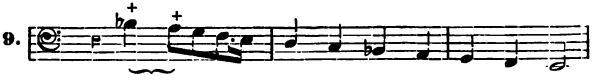
line 4) the "Spear Motive," which is a characteristic variation of the "Motive of Compact" (No. 9). For *Wotan* should enforce, if needful, the compacts of the Gods with his spear.

Wotan sings of the glory of Walhalla. All through his apostrophe resounds the Walhalla Motive. *Fricka* reminds him that he has made a compact with the Giants to deliver over to them for their work in building Walhalla, *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth and Beauty. This introduces on the 'cellos and double basses the MOTIVE OF COMPACT.

9. 

A theme more expressive of the binding force of law it is impossible to conceive. It has the inherent dignity and power of the idea of justice.

Then follows a little domestic spat between *Wotan* and *Fricka*, *Wotan* claiming that *Fricka* was as anxious as he to have Walhalla built, and *Fricka* answering that she desired to have it erected in order to persuade *Wotan* to lead a more domestic life. At *Fricka's* words,

"Halls, bright and gleaming,"

the FRICKA MOTIVE is heard for the first time (page 61, line 1). It is a caressing motive of much grace and beauty:

10.

It is also prominent in *Wotan's* reply immediately following. When *Wotan* tells *Fricka* that he never in-

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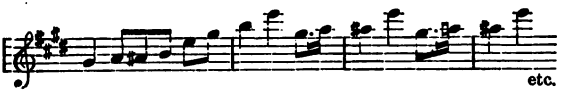
tended to really give up *Freia* to the Giants, chromatics, like little tongues of fire, appear in the accompaniment (page 63, line 3). They are suggestive of the *Loge*, Motive, for with the aid of Loge, *Wotan* hopes to trick the Giants. "Then save her at once!" calls *Fricka*, as *Freia* enters in hasty flight. At this point (page 64, line 1) is heard the first bar of the Freia Motive combined with the Flight Motive. The MOTIVE OF FLIGHT is as follows:

11.

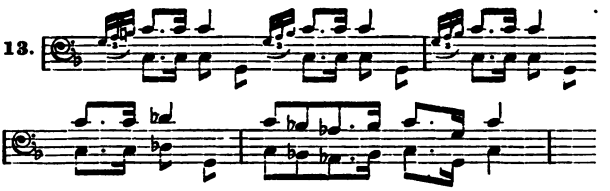
The following is the FREIA MOTIVE:

12.



I give it here already in full for convenient reference. With *Freia's* exclamations that the Giants are pursuing her the first suggestion of the Giant Motive appears (page 64, line 3), and as these "great, hulking fellows" enter the heavy, clumsy GIANT MOTIVE is heard in its entirety (page 68, line 1):

13.



Fasolt and *Fafner* have come to demand that *Wotan* deliver up to them *Freia*, according to his promise when

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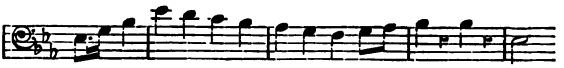
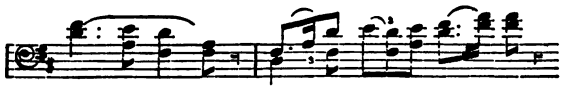
they agreed to build Walhalla for him. In the ensuing scene, in which *Wotan* parleys with the giants, the Giant Motive, the Walhalla Motive, the Motive of the Compact and the first bar of the Freia Motive figure until *Fasolt's* threatening words (page 72, line 1):

"Peace wane when you break your compact,"

when there is heard a version of the Motive of Compact characteristic enough to be distinguished as the MOTIVE OF COMPACT WITH THE GIANTS:

14. 

The Walhalla, Giant and Freia motives again are heard until *Fafner* speaks of the golden apples which grow in *Freia's* garden (page 74, line 1). These golden apples are the fruit of which the gods partake in order to enjoy eternal youth. The Motive of Eternal Youth, which now appears, is one of the loveliest in the Cycle. It seems as though age could not wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety. Its first bar is reminiscent of the Ring Motive (No. 6), for there is subtle relationship between the Golden Apples of *Freia* and the Rhinegold. This is the MOTIVE OF ETERNAL YOUTH:

15. 

It is finely combined with the Giant Motive at *Fafner's* words:

"Let her forthwith be torn from them all."

Froh and *Donner*, *Freia's* brothers, enter hastily to save their sister. As *Froh* clasps her in his arms, while

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Donner confronts the Giants, the Motive of Eternal Youth rings out triumphantly on the horns and woodwind (page 75, line 4).

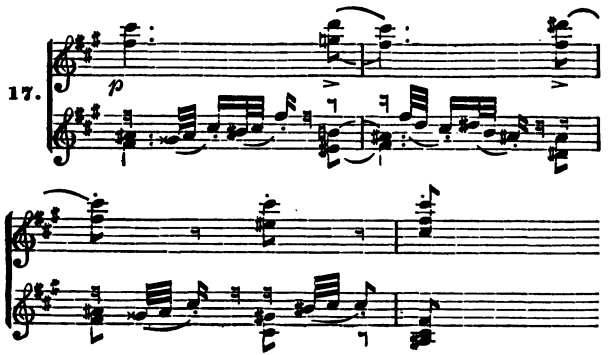
But *Freia's* hope is short-lived. The Motive of the Compact with the Giants, with its weighty import, resounds as *Wotan* stretches his spear between the hostile groups. For though *Wotan* desires to keep *Freia* in Walhalla, he dare not offend the Giants. But at this critical moment he sees his cunning adviser, *Loge*, approaching. These are *Loge's* characteristic motives:

LOGE MOTIVE:

16.

MAGIC FIRE MOTIVE:

17.



They are heard throughout the ensuing scene, in which *Wotan* upbraids *Loge* for not having discovered something which the Giants would be willing to accept as a

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substitute for *Freia*. *Loge* says he has traveled the world over without finding aught that would compensate man for the renunciation of a lovely woman. At this point is heard the Motive of Renunciation. Then follows *Loge's* narrative of his wanderings. With great cunning he intends to tell *Wotan* of the theft of the Rhinegold and of the wondrous worth of a ring shaped from the gold in order to incite the listening Giants to ask for it as a compensation for giving up *Freia*. Hence Wagner, as *Loge* begins his narrative, has blended, with a marvelous sense of musical beauty and dramatic fitness, two phrases: the Freia Motive and the accompaniment to the Rhine daughters' shout of triumph in the first scene. Whoever will turn to page 85, line 4, last two bars of the vocal-piano score, will find the Freia Motive in the treble and the somewhat simplified accompaniment to the cry "Rhinegold" in the bass. This music continues until *Loge* says that he discovered but one (namely, *Alberich*) who was willing to renounce love. Then the Rhinegold Motive is sounded tristly in a minor key and immediately afterward is heard the Motive of Renunciation.

Loge next tells how *Alberich* stole the gold. All through this portion of the narrative are heard, in the accompaniment, reminiscences of the motives of the first scene. It should be noticed that when (page 89, line 1) *Loge* gives *Wotan* the message of the Rhinedaughters, that the chief of the gods wrest the gold from *Alberich* and restore it to them, the Rhinegold Motive rings out brilliantly in a major key (C major). *Loge* has already excited the curiosity of the Giants, and when *Fafner* asks him what power *Alberich* will gain through the possession of the gold, he dwells upon the magical attributes of the ring shaped from Rhinegold. As *Wotan*

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ponders over *Loge's* words the Ring Motive is heard, for *Wotan* is planning how he may possess himself of the ring. With true knowledge of human, and especially of feminine nature, Wagner makes *Fricka* ask if articles of jewelry could be made of the gold. As *Loge* tells her that the possession of the ring will insure *Wotan's* fidelity to her and that *Alberich's* Nibelungs are at that moment forging a ring of the Rhinegold, he sings the Fricka Motive (*Fricka* being the guardian of marriage-fidelity), while, when he refers to the Nibelungs (page 92, line 3, last two bars) there is heard for the first time the Nibelung Motive. (The Nibelung Motive will be found (No. 18) at the point when it assumes its due prominence in the score, viz., in the Nibelheim scene.) *Wotan* is evidently strongly bent on wresting the gold from *Alberich* and retaining it in his own possession instead of restoring it to the Rhinedaughters, for, as he stands wrapt in meditation (page 93, line 1), the Rhinegold Motive is heard in a minor key, and as he asks *Loge* how he may shape the gold into a ring we have the Ring Motive. *Loge* tells *Wotan* that *Alberich* has abjured love and already forged the ring. Here the Motive of Renunciation is sounded with a harsh power (page 94, line 3), expressive of *Alberich's* tyranny, which we are soon to witness.

Loge's diplomacy is beginning to bear results. *Fafner* tells *Fasolt* that he deems the possession of the gold more important than *Freia*. Notice here (page 97, line 2, last bar *et seq.*) how the Freia motive, so prominent when the Giants insisted on her as their compensation, is relegated to the bass and how (line 4, last two bars) the Rhinegold Motive breaks in upon the Motive of Eternal Youth as *Fafner* and *Fasolt* again advance toward

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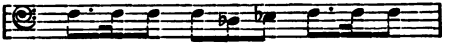
Wotan, for they now request *Wotan* to wrest the gold from *Alberich* and give it to them as ransom for *Freia*. *Wotan* refuses and the Giants, having proclaimed that they will give *Wotan* until evening to determine upon his course, seize *Freia* and drag her away. Here the music is highly descriptive. Pallor settles upon the faces of the gods; they seem to have grown older. Alas, they are already affected by the absence of *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth, whose motives are but palely reflected by the orchestra, as *Loge*, with cunning alarm, explains the cause of the gods' distress; until *Wotan* proclaims that he will go with *Loge* to Nibelheim.

Loge disappears down a crevice in the side of the rock. From it a sulphurous vapor at once issues. When *Wotan* has followed *Loge* into the cleft the vapor fills the stage and conceals the remaining characters. The vapors thicken to a black cloud, continually rising upward, until rocky chasms are seen. These have an upward motion, so that the stage appears to be sinking deeper and deeper. During this transformation scene there is an orchestral interlude. First is heard the Loge Motive, four times interrupted by the Motive of Renunciation. Beginning at page 111, line 5, bar 4, the Motive of Servitude is heard during four bars. Then, with a *molto vivace* the orchestra dashes into the Motive of Flight. Twice the Ring and Rhinegold motives are heard, the latter appearing the second time with the typical NIBELUNG MOTIVE (page 112, line 5), expressive of the enslaved Nibelungs constantly working at the forge.

18. 

This motive accompanies for sixteen bars, during

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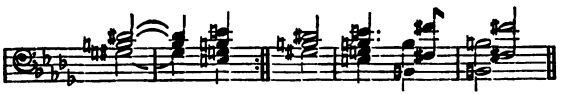
eight of which the rhythm is emphasized by the anvils on the stage, a broad expansion of the Flight Motive. Meanwhile from various distant quarters ruddy gleams of light illumine the chasms, and when the Flight Motive has died away, only the increasing clangor of smithies is heard from all directions. Gradually the sound of the anvils grows fainter; and, as the Ring Motive resounds like a shout of malicious triumph (expressive of *Alberich's* malignant joy at his possession of power), there is seen a subterranean cavern, apparently of illimitable depth, from which narrow shafts lead in all directions.

Scene III.

At the beginning of the third scene we hear again the measures heard when *Alberich* chased the Rhinedaughters. *Alberich* enters from a side cleft dragging after him the shrieking *Mime*. The latter lets fall a helmet which *Alberich* at once seizes. It is the tarnhelmet, made of Rhinegold, the wearing of which enables the wearer to become invisible or assume any shape. As *Alberich* closely examines the Tarnhelmet its motive is heard (page 117, line 2, beginning at the sixth bar). This is the Motive of the Tarnhelmet:

19.



To test its power *Alberich* puts it on and changes into a column of vapor. He asks *Mime* if he is visible, and when *Mime* answers in the negative *Alberich* cries out shrilly, "Then feel me instead," at the same time mak-

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ing poor *Mime* writhe under the blows of a visible scourge.

Alberich then departs—still in the form of a vaporous column—to announce to the Nibelungs that they are henceforth his slavish subjects. *Mime* cowers down with fear and pain. *Wotan* and *Loge* enter from one of the upper shafts. *Mime* tells them how *Alberich* has become all-powerful through the ring and the tarnhelmet made of the Rhinegold. The Motives occurring in *Mime's* narrative are the Nibelung, Servitude and Ring Motives, the latter in the terse, malignantly powerful form in which it occurred just before the opening of the third scene. Then *Alberich*, who has taken off the Tarnhelmet and hung it from his girdle, is seen in the distance, driving a crowd of Nibelungs before him from the caves below. They are laden with gold and silver, which he forces them to pile up in one place and so form a hoard. He suddenly perceives *Wotan* and *Loge*. After abusing *Mime* for permitting strangers to enter Nibelheim, he commands the Nibelungs to descend again into the caverns in search of new treasure for him. They hesitate. You hear the Ring Motive. *Alberich* draws the ring from his finger, stretches it threateningly toward the Nibelungs and commands them to obey the ring's master.

The Nibelungs disperse in headlong flight and with *Mime* rush back into the cavernous recesses. *Alberich* looks with mistrust upon *Wotan* and *Loge*. He asks them what they seek in Nibelheim. *Wotan* tells him they have heard reports of his extraordinary power and have come to ascertain if they are true. After some parleying the Nibelung points to the hoard, saying: "It is the merest heap compared to the mountain of treasure

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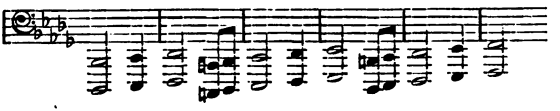
to which it shall rise." Here appears part of the RISING HOARD MOTIVE (page 137, line 4), which in its complete form is as follows:

20. 

Alberich boasts that the whole world will come under his sway (you hear the Ring Motive), that the gods who now laugh and love in the enjoyment of youth and beauty will become subject to him (you hear the Freia Motive); for he has abjured love (you hear the Motive of Renunciation). Hence, even the gods in Walhalla shall dread him (you hear a variation of the Walhalla Motive), and he bids them beware of the time when the night-begotten host of the Nibelungs shall rise from Nibelheim into the realm of daylight (you hear the Rhinegold Motive followed by the Walhalla Motive, for it is through the power gained by the Rhinegold that Alberich hopes to possess himself of Walhalla). *Loge* cunningly flatters *Alberich*, and when the latter tells him of the Tarnhelmet feigns disbelief of *Alberich's* statements. *Alberich*, to prove their truth, puts on the helmet and transforms himself into a huge serpent. The Serpent Motive expresses the windings and writhings of the monster.

The serpent vanishes and *Alberich* reappears. When *Loge* doubts if *Alberich* can transform himself into something very small, the Nibelung changes into a toad. Now is *Loge's* chance. He calls to *Wotan* to set his foot on the toad. As *Wotan* does so, *Loge* puts his hand to its head and seizes the Tarnhelm. *Alberich* is seen writh-

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ing under *Wotan's* foot. *Loge* binds *Alberich;* both seize him, drag him to the shaft from which they descended and disappear ascending. The scene now changes in the reverse direction to that in which it changed when *Wotan* and *Loge* were descending to Nibelheim. The orchestra accompanies the change of scene. The Ring Motive dies away from crashing fortissimo to piano, to be succeeded by the dark Motive of Renunciation. Then is heard the clangor of the Nibelung smithies, and amid it the Motive of Flight in its broadly-expanded form. The Giant, Walhalla, Loge and Servitude Motives follow, the last with crushing force as *Wotan* and *Loge* emerge from the cleft, dragging the pinioned *Alberich* with them. His lease of power was brief. He is again in a condition of servitude.

Scene IV.

A pale mist still veils the prospect as at the end of the second scene. *Loge* and *Wotan* place *Alberich* on the ground and *Loge* dances around the pinioned Nibelung, mockingly snapping his fingers at the prisoner. *Wotan* joins *Loge* in his mockery of *Alberich.* The Nibelung asks what he must give for his freedom. "Your hoard and your glittering gold," is *Wotan's* answer. *Alberich* assents to the ransom and *Loge* frees the gnome's right hand, *Alberich* raises the ring to his lips and murmurs a secret behest. The Nibelung Motive is heard, combined at first with the Motive of the Rising Hoard, then with the Motive of Servitude and later with both. This combination of the three Motives will be found on page 165, line 2, last bar; the Motive of Servitude being played in the right hand, the other two in the left. These three Motives continue prom-

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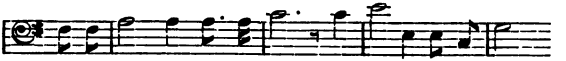
inent as long as the Nibelungs emerge from the cleft and heap up the hoard. Then, as *Alberich* stretches out the Ring toward them, they rush in terror toward the cleft, into which they disappear. *Alberich* now asks for his freedom, but *Loge* throws the Tarnhelmet on to the heap. *Wotan* further demands that *Alberich* also give up the ring. At these words dismay and terror are depicted on *Alberich's* face. He had hoped to save the ring, but in vain. *Wotan* tears it from the gnome's finger. Then *Alberich*, impelled by hate and rage, curses the ring. The MOTIVE OF THE CURSE is as follows:

21. 

To it should be added the syncopated measures expressive of the threatening and ever-active NIBELUNGS' HATE:

22.

Amid the heavy thuds of the Motive of Servitude *Alberich* vanishes in the cleft.

The mist begins to rise. It grows lighter. The Giant Motive and the Motive of Eternal Youth are heard, for the giants are approaching with *Freia*. *Donner*, *Froh* and *Fricka* hasten to greet *Wotan*. *Fasolt* and *Fafner* enter with *Freia*. It has grown clear, except that the mist still hides the distant castle. *Freia's* presence seems to have restored youth to the gods. While the Motive of the Giant Compact resounds, *Fasolt* asks for the ransom for *Freia*. *Wotan* points to the hoard. With staves the giants measure off a space of the

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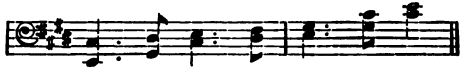
height and breadth of *Freia*. That space must be filled out with treasure.

Loge and *Froh* pile up the hoard, but the giants are not satisfied even when the Tarnhelmet has been added. They wish also the ring to fill out a crevice. *Wotan* turns in anger away from them. A bluish light glimmers in the rocky cleft to the right, and through it *Erda* rises to half her height. She warns *Wotan* against retaining possession of the ring. The Motives prominent during the action preceding the appearance of *Erda* will be readily recognized. They are the Giant Compact Motive combined with the Nibelung motive (the latter combined with the Giant Motive and Motive of the Hoard) and the Ring Motive, which breaks in upon the action with tragic force as *Wotan* refuses to give up the ring to the giants. The ERDA MOTIVE bears a strong resemblance to the Rhine Motive:

23. 

The syncopated notes of the Nibelungs' malevolence, so threateningly indicative of the harm which *Alberich* is plotting, are also heard in *Erda's* warning (page 193, line 4). *Wotan*, heeding her words, throws the ring upon the hoard. The giants release *Freia*, who rushes joyfully toward the gods. Here the Freia Motive, combined with the Flight Motive, now no longer agitated but joyful, rings out gleefully. Soon these motives are interrupted by the Giant and Nibelung motives, there being added to these later the Motive of the Nibelungs' Hate and the Ring Motive. *Alberich's* curse is already beginning its dread work. The giants dispute over the spoils, their dispute waxes to strife, and at last *Fafner*

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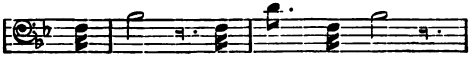
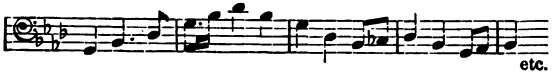
slays *Fasolt* and snatches the ring from the dying giant. As the gods gaze horror-stricken upon the scene, the Curse Motive resounds with crushing force (page 200, line 3). *Loge* congratulates *Wotan* that he should have given up the curse-laden ring. His words are accompanied by the Motive of the Nibelungs' Hate. Yet even *Fricka's* caresses, as she asks *Wotan* to lead her into Walhalla, cannot divert the god's mind from dark thoughts, and the Curse Motive accompanies his gloomy, curse-haunted reflections.

Donner ascends to the top of a lofty rock. He gathers the mists about him until he is enveloped by a black cloud. He swings his hammer. There is a flash of lightning, a crash of thunder, and lo! the cloud vanishes. A rainbow bridge spans the valley to Walhalla, which is illumined by the setting sun. The DONNER MOTIVE is as follows:

24. 

Wotan eloquently greets Walhalla, and then, taking *Fricka* by the hand, leads the procession of the gods into the castle.

The music of this scene is of wondrous eloquence and beauty. Six harps are added to the ordinary orchestral instruments, and as the variegated bridge is seen their arpeggios shimmer like the colors of the rainbow around the broad, majestic RAINBOW MOTIVE:

25. 

Then the stately Walhalla Motive resounds as the gods gaze, lost in admiration, at the Walhalla. It gives

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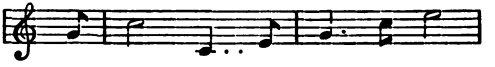
way to the Ring Motive as *Wotan* speaks of the day's ills; and then as he is inspired by the idea of begetting a race of demi-gods to conquer the Nibelungs, there is heard for the first time the SWORD MOTIVE:

26. 

But the cunning *Loge* knows that the curse must do its work, even if not until the distant future; and hence as he remains in the foreground looking after the gods, the Loge and Ring Motives are heard.

The cries of the Rhinedaughters greet *Wotan*. They beg him to restore the ring to them. But *Wotan* is deaf to their entreaties. He preferred to give the ring to the giants rather than forfeit *Freia*.

The Walhalla Motive swells to a majestic climax and the gods enter the castle. Amid shimmering arpeggios the Rainbow Motive resounds. The gods have attained the height of their glory—but the Nibelung's curse is still potent, and it will bring woe upon all who have possessed or will possess the ring until it is restored to the Rhinedaughters. *Fasolt* was only the first victim of *Alberich's* curse.

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BRÜNNHILDE.

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"The Valkyr."

Wotan's enjoyment of Walhalla was destined to be short-lived. Filled with dismay by the death of *Fasolt* in the combat of the giants for the accursed Ring, and impelled by a dread presentiment that the force of the curse would be visited upon the gods, he descended from Walhalla to the abode of the all-wise woman, *Erda*. We must assume that matrimonial obligations were not strictly enforced among the gods. It may have been inferred, from *Fricka's* anxiety to have Walhalla built in order to induce *Wotan* to lead a more domestic life, that the chief god was an old offender against the marriage vow, for though *Fricka* was the guardian goddess of connubial virtue, she does not seem to have been able to hold her spouse in check. To say the least, the chief god was very promiscuous in his attentions to the gentler sex. Thus his visit to *Erda* was not entirely unremunerative, for, while he could not obtain from her a forecast of the future of the gods, she bore him nine daughters. These were the Valkyrs, headed by *Brünnhilde*—the wild horsewomen of the air, who on winged steeds bore the dead heroes to Walhalla, the warrior's heaven. With the aid of the Valkyrs and the heroes they gathered to Walhalla, *Wotan* hoped to repel any assault upon his castle by the enemies of the gods.

But though the host of heroes grew to a goodly num-

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ber, the terror of *Alberich's* curse still haunted the chief of the gods. He might have freed himself from it had he returned the Ring and Helmet made of Rhinegold to the Rhinedaughters, from whom *Alberich* filched it; but in his desire to persuade the giants to relinquish *Freia*, whom he had promised to them as a reward for building Walhalla, he, having wrested the Ring from *Alberich*, gave it to the giants instead of returning it to the Rhinedaughters. He saw the giants contending for the possession of the ring and saw *Fasolt* slain—the first victim of *Alberich's* curse. He knows that the giant *Fafner*, having assumed the shape of a huge serpent, now guards the Niebelung treasure, which includes the Ring and the Tarnhelmet, in a cave in the heart of a dense forest. How shall the Rhinegold be restored to the Rhinedaughters?

Wotan hopes that this may be consummated by a human hero who, free from the lust for power which obtains among the gods shall, with a sword of *Wotan's* own forging, slay *Fafner*, gain possession of the Rhinegold and restore it to its rightful owners, thus righting *Wotan's* guilty act and freeing the gods from the curse. To accomplish this *Wotan*, in human guise as Wälse, begets in wedlock with a woman the twins *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. How the curse of *Alberich* is visited upon these is related in "The Valkyr."

The *dramatis personæ* in "The Valkyr" are *Brünnhilde* and her eight sister valkyrs, *Fricka*, *Sieglinde*, *Siegmund*, *Hunding* (the husband of *Sieglinde*), and *Wotan*. The action begins after the marriage of *Sieglinde* to *Hunding*. The earlier events in the lives of the two Wälsings we learn of in the narratives of *Siegmund* and *Wotan* respectively in the first and second acts of "The Valkyr."

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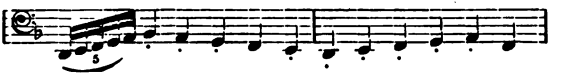
Of course, the Wälsings are in ignorance of the divinity of their father. They know him only as Wälse.

Act I.

The introduction to "The Valkyr" is very different in character from that to "The Rhinegold." In that the Rhine flowing peacefully toward the sea and the innocent gambols of the Rhinedaughters were musically depicted. But "The Valkyr" opens in storm and stress. It is as though the peace and happiness of the first scene of the cycle had vanished from the earth with *Alberich's* abjuration of love, his theft of the gold and *Wotan's* equally treacherous crime. This vorspiel is a masterly representation in tone of a storm gathering for its last infuriated onslaught. There is majestic force in its climax. The elements are unloosed. The wind sweeps through the forest. Lightning flashes in jagged streaks across the black heavens. There is a crash of thunder and the storm has spent its force.

Two leading motives are employed in this introduction. They are the Storm Motive and the Donner Motive (No. 24). The Storm Motive (page 1, line 1) is as follows:

27. 

These themes are as elementary as that of the Fifth Symphony. From the theme of that symphony Beethoven developed a work which by many is considered his grandest. Similarly Wagner has composed, with the use of only the two motives named, the most stupendous storm music we have—not even excepting the

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storm of the Pastorale. I call the attention of those who still labor under the error that Wagner's methods are obscure and involved to the vorspiel to "The Valkyr."

In the early portion of this vorspiel only the string instruments are used. Gradually the instrumentation grows more powerful. With the climax we have a tremendous *f f* on the contra tuba and two tympani, followed by the crash of the Donner Motive on the wind instruments.

The storm then gradually dies away. Before it has quite passed over, the curtain rises, revealing the large hall of *Hunding's* dwelling. This hall is built around a huge ash-tree, whose trunk and branches pierce the roof, over which the foliage is supposed to spread. There are walls of rough-hewn boards, here and there hung with large plaited and woven hangings. In the right foreground is a large, open hearth; back of it in a recess is the larder, separated from the hall by a woven hanging, half drawn. In the background is a large door. A few steps in the left foreground lead up to the door of an inner room. The furniture of the hall is primitive and rude. It consists chiefly of a table, bench and stools in front of the ash-tree. Only the light of the fire on the hearth illumines the room; though occasionally its fitful gleam is slightly intensified by a distant flash of lightning from the departing storm.

The door in the background is opened from without. *Siegmund*, supporting himself with his hand on the bolt, stands in the entrance. He seems exhausted. His appearance is that of a fugitive who has reached the limit of his powers of endurance. Seeing no one in the hall,

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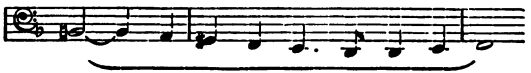
he staggers toward the hearth and sinks upon a bearskin rug before it, with the exclamation:

" Whose hearth this may be,
Here I must rest me."

In an Italian opera we would probably have had at this point a very amusing illustration of the total disregard for dramatic fitness which characterizes the old-fashioned opera. *Siegmund*, though supposed to be exhausted by his flight through the storm, would have had strength enough left to stand near the foot-lights and sing an aria with the regulation bravura passages, and, if he got enough applause, to sing it over again. Then only would he sink down upon the rug exhausted, but whether from singing or from his flight through the storm we would be unable to say. Wagner's treatment of this scene is masterly. As *Siegmund* stands in the entrance we hear the SIEGMUND MOTIVE (page 5, line 5):

28. 

This is a sad, weary strain on 'cellos and basses. It seems the wearier for the burden of an accompanying figure on the horns, beneath which it seems to stagger as *Siegmund* staggers toward the hearth. Thus the music not only reflects *Siegmund's* weary mien, but accompanies most graphically his weary gait. Perhaps Wagner's intention was more metaphysical. Maybe the burden beneath which the Siegmund Motive staggers is the curse of *Alberich*. It is certainly (as we shall see) through that curse that *Siegmund's* life has been one of storm and stress.

When the storm-beaten Wälsung has sunk upon the rug the Siegmund Motive is followed by the Storm Mo-

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tive, *pp*—and the storm has died away. The door of the room to the left opens and *Sieglinde* appears. She has heard some one enter, and thinking her husband has returned has come into the hall to meet him. Seeing a stranger stretched upon the bearskin rug she approaches and bends compassionately over him.

Her compassionate action is accompanied by a new motive, which by Wagner's commentators has been entitled the Motive of Compassion. But it seems to me to have a further meaning as expressing the sympathy between two souls, a tie so subtle that it is at first invisible even to those whom it unites. *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*, it will be remembered, belong to the same race; and though they are at this point of the action unknown to one another, yet, as *Sieglinde* bends over the hunted, storm-beaten *Siegmund*, that subtle sympathy causes her to regard him with more solicitude than would be awakened by any other unfortunate stranger. Hence I have called this motive the MOTIVE OF SYMPATHY—taking sympathy in its double meaning of compassion and affinity of feeling:

29.

The beauty of this brief phrase is enhanced by its unpretentiousness. It wells up from the orchestra as spontaneously as pity mingled with sympathetic sorrow wells up from the heart of a gentle woman. As it is *Siegmund* who has awakened these feelings in *Sieglinde*, the Motive of Sympathy is heard simultaneously with the Siegmund Motive (page 7, line 4).

Siegmund, suddenly raising his head, ejaculates, "Water, water!" *Sieglinde* hastily snatches up a drink-

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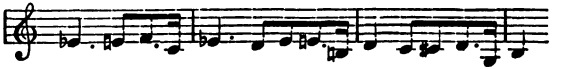
ing-horn and, having quickly filled it at a spring near the house, swiftly returns and hands it to *Siegmund*. As though new hope were engendered in *Siegmund's* breast by *Sieglinde's* gentle ministration the Siegmund Motive rises higher and higher, gathering passion in its upward sweep and then, combined again with the Motive of Sympathy, sinks to an expression of heartfelt gratitude. This passage is scored entirely for strings. Yet no composer, except Wagner, has evoked from a full orchestra sounds richer or more sensuously beautiful (page 8, line 3 and 4).

Siegmund drinks, and then hands the drinking-horn back to *Sieglinde*. As his look falls upon her features he regards them with growing interest. That strange presentiment of affinity is awakened in his breast. But in him, the storm-beaten fugitive, the emotion called forth by *Sieglinde's* gentle acts is deeper than sympathy of feeling. We hear versions of the Siegmund Motive and the Motive of Flight (No. 11). But the former is no longer weary and despairing, nor the latter precipitate. It seems as though *Siegmund*, having found a haven of rest, were recalling his life's vicissitudes with that feeling of sadness

"Which is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain."

These reminiscences are followed by the LOVE MOTIVE, one of the most tenderly expressive phrases ever penned (page 9, line 3) :

30. 

The melody in the entire passage (that is, in the version of the Siegmund and Flight Motives and in the

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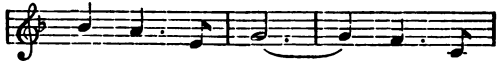
Love Motive) is played by a single 'cello, and thus is invested with a mournful beauty which seems the musical expression of the thought in the lines from Longfellow I have just quoted.

The version of the Motive of Flight preceding the Love Motive is as follows:

A. 

The Love Motive is the mainspring of this act. For this act tells the story of love from its inception to its consummation. Similarly in the course of this act the Love Motive rises by degrees of intensity from an expression of the first tender presentiment of affection to the very ecstasy of love.

Siegmund asks with whom he has found shelter. *Sieglinde* replies that the house is *Hunding's*, and she his wife, and requests *Siegmund* to await her husband's return.

Weaponless am I:
The wounded guest,
He will surely give shelter,

is *Siegmund's* reply. With anxious celerity, *Sieglinde* asks him to show her his wounds. But, refreshed by the draught of cool spring water and with hope revived by her sympathetic presence, he gathers force and, raising himself to a sitting posture, exclaims that his wounds are but slight; his frame is still firm, and had sword and shield been half so firm he would not have fled from his foes. His strength was spent in flight through the storm; but the night that sank on his vision has yielded again to the sunshine of *Sieglinde's* presence. At these words the Motive of Sympathy rises

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like a sweet hope. *Sieglinde* fills the drinking-horn with mead and offers it to *Siegmund*. He asks her to take the first sip. She does so and then hands it to him. His eyes rest upon her while he drinks. As he returns the drinking-horn to her there are traces of deep emotion in his mien. He sighs and gloomily bows his head. The action at this point is most expressively accompanied by the orchestra. Specially noteworthy are an impassioned upward sweep of the Motive of Sympathy as *Siegmund* regards *Sieglinde* with traces of deep emotion in his mien; the Motive of Flight as he sighs, thinking perhaps that misfortune will soon part them; and the sad, weary Siegmund Motive as he bows his head (page 12, line 4; page 13, lines 1 and 2).

In a voice trembling with emotion, *Siegmund* tells her that she has harbored one whom misfortune follows whithersoever he wends his footsteps. Lest misfortune should through him enter her dwelling he will depart. With firm, determined strides he has reached the door, when *Sieglinde*, forgetting all in her growing passion, calls after him:

Then tarry here!
Not bringest thou woe thither
Where sorrow already reigns.

Upon *Sieglinde*, as one of the Wälsung race, rests the curse of *Alberich*. Her words are followed by a phrase freighted with woe, the Motive of the Wälsung Race or the WÄLSUNG MOTIVE (page 15, line 1):

31.

Like the Siegmund Motive it is intoned by the 'cellos and basses.

Siegmund turns and gazes searchingly into her fea-

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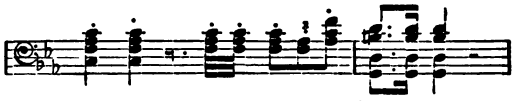
tures. Sadly, and as though shamed by her outburst of feeling, she lets her eyes sink toward the ground. *Siegmund* returns. He leans against the hearth. His calm, steady gaze rests upon her. She slowly raises her eyes to his. In long silence and with deep emotion they regard each other. In the musical accompaniment to this scene several motives are very effectively combined. Its basis is appropriately formed by the Wälsung Motive. Over this rises the Motive of Sympathy. We then hear the Wälsung and Flight Motives combined; next the Love Motive, and finally the Siegmund Motive.

Sieglinde is the first to start from the reverie. She hears *Hunding* leading his horse to the stall. The music suddenly changes in character. Like a premonition of *Hunding's* entrance we hear the HUNDING MOTIVE, *pp*. Then as *Hunding*, armed with spear and shield, stands upon the threshold, this HUNDING MOTIVE—as dark, forbidding and portentous of woe to the two Wälsungs as *Hunding's* sombre visage—resounds with dread power on the tubas (page 16, line 3):

32. 

Calmly and firmly *Siegmund* meets *Hunding's* scrutiny. *Sieglinde* tells her husband that she found *Siegmund* exhausted near the hearth and refreshed him with mead. *Hunding* bids her prepare the meal. He does this with a semblance of graciousness, and similarly his Motive assumes a semblance of graciousness (page 17, lines 4 (last bar) and 5, and page 18, line 1). While preparing the meal *Sieglinde's* glance again and again wanders over to *Siegmund*. *Hunding*, scanning the stranger's

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features, detects in them a resemblance to those of *Sieglinde*. "How like unto her!" he mutters to himself, his words being followed by the Motive of Compact (No. 9)—for *Wotan's* surrender of the Rhinegold to the giants in order to thus fulfil his compact with them for building Walhalla necessitated the creation of the Wälsung race, through a scion of which *Wotan* hopes to see the Rhinegold restored to the Rhinedaughters.

The table is spread. The three seat themselves. *Hunding* questions *Siegmund* as to his name. *Siegmund* gazes thoughtfully before him. *Sieglinde* regards him with noticeable interest. *Hunding*, who has observed both, bids *Siegmund* gratify *Sieglinde's* curiosity, and she, little suspecting her husband's thoughts, urges *Siegmund* to tell his story. *Siegmund* in the narrative which follows conceals his identity and that of his father, evidently through fear that *Hunding* may be one of the numerous enemies of the Wälsungs. He calls himself Woeful and his father Wolf. He tells how one day in his boyhood, after hunting with his father, they returned to find their dwelling in ashes, his mother's corpse among the ruins and no trace of his twin sister. Hunted by enemies, he and his father lived a wild life in the forest until in one of the combats they were separated. In vain he sought for a trace of his father. He found only a wild wolf's fur.*

Siegmund sought to mingle with men and women, but wherever he went misfortune and strife followed him.

* At this point you hear the Walhalla Motive, No. 8, for the father was none other than *Wotan*, known to his human descendants, however, only as Wälse. In *Wotan's* narrative in the next act it will be found that *Wotan* purposely created these misfortunes for *Siegmund* in order to strengthen him for his task.

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His last combat was in behalf of a maiden whose brothers were forcing her to wed a man she loved not. He defended her till shield and sword were in splinters. Then he fled, reaching *Hunding's* house when almost dead from exhaustion.

The story of *Siegmund* is told in melodious recitative. It is not a melody in the old-fashioned meaning of the term, but it fairly teems with melodiousness. It will have been observed that incidents very different in kind are related by *Siegmund*. It would be impossible to treat this narrative with sufficient variety of expression in a melody. But in Wagner's melodious recitative the musical phrases reflect every incident narrated by *Siegmund*. For instance, when *Siegmund* tells how he went hunting with his father there is joyous freshness and abandon in the music, which, however, suddenly sinks to sadness as he narrates how they returned and found the Wälsung dwelling devastated by enemies. We hear also the Hunding Motive at this point, which thus indicates that those who brought this misfortune upon the Wälsungs were none other than *Hunding* and his kinsmen. As *Siegmund* tells how, when he was separated from his father, he sought to mingle with men and women you hear the Love Motive, while his description of his latest combat is accompanied by the rhythm of the Hunding Motive. Those whom *Siegmund* slew were *Hunding's* kinsmen. Thus *Siegmund's* dark fate has driven him to seek shelter in the house of the very man who is the arch-enemy of his race and is bound by the laws of kinship to avenge on *Siegmund* the death of kinsmen. These are some of the salient points of *Siegmund's* narrative concerning which much more might be written. To me this portion of the score, whether we consider it in con-

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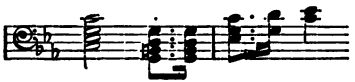
nection with the words or as pure music, has far more value than other more popular passages, for instance, *Siegmund's* Love-song; though for some years to come probably the mass of the public will continue to regard the latter as the "gem of the opera."

As *Siegmund* concludes his narative the Wälsung Motive is heard. Gazing with ardent longing toward *Sieglinde*, he says:

> Now know'st thou, questioning wife,
> Why "Peaceful" is not my name.

These words are sung to a lovely phrase. Then, as *Siegmund* rises and strides over to the hearth while *Sieglinde*, pale and deeply affected by his tale, bows her head, there is heard on the horns, bassoons, violas and 'cellos a motive expressive of the heroic fortitude of the Wälsungs in struggling against their fate. It is the MOTIVE OF THE WÄLSUNGS' HEROISM (page 32, line 2):

33. 

It is followed by an effective variation of the Wälsung Motive, the whole concluding beautifully with the phrase last sung by *Siegmund*.

Hunding's sombre visage darkens more deeply as he rises. His were the kinsmen of the woman for whom *Siegmund* fought. The laws of hospitality make it imperative that he should give the Wälsung shelter for that night, but he bids *Siegmund* be ready for combat in the morn. He commands *Sieglinde* to prepare his night-draught. She is seen to throw spices into the horn. As she is about to enter the inner chamber she turns her eyes longingly upon the weaponless *Siegmund* and,

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having attracted his attention, fixes her gaze significantly upon a spot on the trunk of the ash-tree. As her look falls upon the tree the SWORD MOTIVE (26) is heard.

When *Hunding* has followed *Sieglinde*, *Siegmund* sinks down upon the bearskin near the hearth and broods over his fate. His gloomy thoughts are accompanied by the threatening rhythm of the Hunding Motive and the Sword Motive *in a minor key*, for *Siegmund* is still weaponless. When giving vent to his thoughts, he exclaims:

A sword my father did promise!

the Motive of Compact is heard. But the promise appears to have been delusive and so the Compact Motive soon loses itself in the threatening rhythm of the Hunding Motive. With the strength of desperation *Siegmund* invokes Wälse's aid. He cries:

Wälse! Wälse! Where is thy sword?

The Sword Motive rings out like a shout of triumph. The embers of the fire collapse. In the glare that for a moment falls upon the ash-tree the hilt of a sword whose blade is buried in the trunk of the tree is discernible at the point upon which *Sieglinde's* look last rested. While the Motive of the Sword gently rises and falls, like the coming and going of a lovely memory, *Siegmund* apostrophizes the sheen as the reflection of *Sieglinde's* glance. The embers die out. Night falls upon the scene. But in *Siegmund's* thoughts the memory of that pitying, loving look glimmers on.

The Motive of Sympathy hastening like quick footsteps—and *Sieglinde* is by *Siegmund's* side. She has given *Hunding* a sleeping potion. She will point out a

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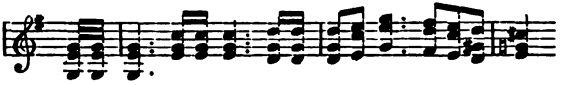
weapon to *Siegmund*—a sword. If he can wield it she will call him the greatest hero, for only the mightiest can wield it. The music quickens with the subdued excitement in the breasts of the two Wälsungs. You hear the Sword Motive, and above it, on horns, clarinet and oboe, a new motive—that of the WÄLSUNGS' CALL TO VICTORY (page 44, line 1):

34. 

for *Sieglinde* hopes that with the sword the stranger, who has awakened so quickly love in her breast, will overcome *Hunding*. This motive has a resistless, onward sweep. *Sieglinde*, amid the strains of the stately Walhalla Motive, followed by the Sword Motive, narrates the story of the sword. While *Hunding* and his kinsmen were feasting in honor of her forced marriage with him, an aged stranger entered the hall. The men knew him not and shrank from his fiery glance. But upon her his look rested with tender compassion. With a mighty thrust he buried a sword up to its hilt in the trunk of the ash-tree. Whoever drew it from its sheath to him it should belong. The stranger went his way. One after another the strong men tugged at the hilt—but in vain. Then she knew who the aged stranger was and for whom the sword was destined.

The Sword Motive rings out like a joyous shout, and *Sieglinde's* voice mingles with the triumphant notes of the Wälsungs' Call to Victory as she turns to *Siegmund:*

Oh, found I in thee
The friend in need!

The Motive of the Wälsungs' heroism, now no longer

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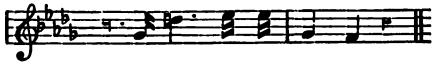
full of tragic import, but forceful and defiant—and *Siegmund* holds *Sieglinde* in his embrace. There is a rush of wind. The woven hangings flap and fall. As the lovers turn, a glorious sight greets their eyes. The landscape is illumined by the moon. Its silver sheen flows down the hills and quivers along the meadows whose grasses tremble in the breeze. All nature seems to be throbbing in unison with the hearts of the lovers. The voices of spring—the season when love opens like the buds—are whispered to *Siegmund* by the orchestra, and as he hears them he greets *Sieglinde* with the LOVE SONG:

35.

The Love Motive, impassioned, irresistible, sweeps through the harmonies—and Love and Spring are united. The Love Motive also pulsates through *Sieglinde's* ecstatic reply after she has given herself fully up to *Siegmund* in the Flight Motive—for before his coming her woes have fled as winter flies before the coming of spring. With *Siegmund's* exclamation:

Oh, wondrous vision!
Rapturous woman!

there rises from the orchestra like a vision of loveliness the Motive of Freia (No. 12), the Venus of German mythology. In its embrace it folds this pulsating theme,

B. 

which throbs on like a long love-kiss until it seem-

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ingly yields to the blandishments of this caressing phrase:

This throbbing, pulsating, caressing music is succeeded by a moment of repose. While the Walhalla Motive is heard *Sieglinde* gazes searchingly into *Siegmund's* features. They are strangely familiar to her. The Love Motive weaves itself around *Siegmund's* words as he also discovers familiar traces in *Sieglinde's* mien. *Sieglinde* once saw her face reflected in the brook—it seems reflected in *Siegmund's* features. She has heard his voice —it was when she heard the echo of her own voice in the forest. His look has already gleamed upon her—it was when the stranger gazed upon her before he thrust the sword into the trunk of the ash-tree.* Was Wolf really his father—is Woeful really his name?

Siegmund proclaims that his father was a wolf to timid foxes. But he whose glance gleamed as gleams *Sieglinde's* glance was *Wälse*. Then, while the orchestra fairly seethes with excitement, *Sieglinde*, almost beside herself, calls jubilantly to him who came to her a stranger out of the storm:

Was Wälse thy father,
And art thou a Wälsung!
Thrust he for thee
His sword in the tree!
Then let me name thee
As I love thee—
Siegmund, I call thee!

* Notice here the combination of Sword and Wälsungs' Heroism Motives, followed by a combination of Sword and Walhalla Motives.

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Siegmund leaps upon the table. The Motive of the Wälsungs' Heroism rings out in defiance of the enemies of the race. The Sword Motive—and he has grasped the hilt; the Motive of Compact, ominous of the fatality which hangs over the Wälsungs; the Motive of Renunciation, with its threatening import; then the Sword Motive—brilliant like the glitter of refulgent steel—and *Siegmund* has unsheathed the sword. The Wälsungs' Call to Victory, like a song of triumph; a superb upward sweep of the Sword Motive; the Love Motive, now rushing onward in the very ecstasy of passion, and *Siegmund* holds in his embrace *Sieglinde*—sister and bride!

Act II.

The Vorspiel: With an upward rush of the Sword Motive, resolved into 9-8 time, the orchestra dashes into the Flight Motive. The Sword Motive in this 9-8 rhythm closely resembles the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride (No. 37) and the Flight Motive in the version in which it appears is much like the Valkyrs' Shout (No. 36). The Ride and the Shout are heard in the course of the vorspiel, the former with tremendous force on trumpets and trombones as the curtain rises upon a wild, rocky mountain pass, at the back of which, through a natural rock-formed arch, a gorge slopes downward. In the foreground stands *Wotan*, armed with spear, shield and helmet. Before him is *Brünnhilde* in the superb costume of the Valkyrs. The stormy spirit of the Vorspiel pervades the music of *Wotan's* command to *Brünnhilde* that she bridle her steed for battle and spur it to the fray to do combat for *Siegmund* against *Hunding*.

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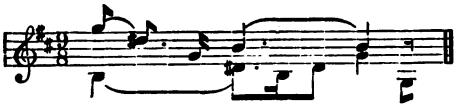
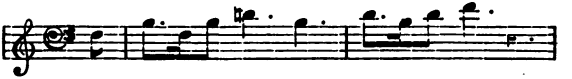
Brünnhilde greets *Wotan's* command with the weirdly, joyous SHOUT OF THE VALKYRS:

Hojotoho! Heiaha-ha!

It is the cry of the wild horsewomen of the air, coursing through storm-clouds, their shields flashing back the lightning, their voices mingling with the shrieks of the tempest. Weirder, wilder joy has never found expression in music. The tone-colors employed by Wagner are so graphic that one sees the streaming manes of the steeds of the air and the streaks of lightning playing around their riders, and hears the whistling of the winds. It is a marvelous tone-picture, equaled only by other creations of its creator:

36. 

The accompanying figure is based on the Motive of the RIDE OF THE VALKYRS:

37. 

Brünnhilde having leapt from rock to rock, to the highest peak of the mountain, again faces *Wotan*, and with delightful banter calls to him that *Fricka* is approaching in her ram-drawn chariot. At the words:

Ha! how she wields her golden scourge,

we hear a version of the Motive of Servitude (No. 3), which occurs again when *Fricka* has appeared and descended from her chariot and advances toward *Wotan*, *Brünnhilde* having meanwhile disappeared behind the mountain height. *Wotan*, through his guilt, has become

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the slave of his evil conscience, and the Motive of Servitude now stands for the remorseless energy with which crime pursues its perpetrator.

The ensuing scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* has been subjected to an immense amount of criticism and ridicule. Even Wagnerian commentators are somewhat timid in their references to it. Von Wolzogen dismisses it with a few words. It is therefore with some pride that I point to an American criticism which is justly appreciative. I refer to the letters which Mr. J. R. G. Hassard contributed from Bayreuth to the *Tribune* in 1876. The lucidity of Mr. Hassard's treatment of the subject, the felicity of his diction, his thorough comprehension of Wagner's theory and his appreciation of its artistic beauty, make these letters worthy to be ranked among the most important contributions to the musical literature of the day. This scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* Mr. Hassard calls "another of those great dramatic scenes, full of fine discriminations, of forcible declamation, and of almost illimitable suggestiveness, which alone would point out Wagner as the greatest of writers for the musical stage."

The plain facts concerning this scene are these: It is somewhat long, and hence, from a dramatic point of view, perhaps too extended, as it delays the action. But if it may be *partially* condemned dramatically, it must be *entirely* and unreservedly praised musically. Indeed it is musically so fine that to an intelligent listener all sense of lengthiness disappears. *Fricka* is the protector of the marriage vow, and as such she has come in anger to demand from *Wotan* vengeance in behalf of *Hunding*. As she advances hastily toward *Wotan*, her angry, passionate demeanor is reflected by the orchestra, and this

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effective musical expression of *Fricka's* ire is often heard in the course of the scene. When near *Wotan* she moderates her pace and her angry demeanor gives way to sullen dignity. This change is also graphically depicted in the orchestra in a phrase based on the fourth bar of the *Fricka* motive (page 89, lines 2 (last bar) and 3).

Wotan feigns ignorance of the cause of *Fricka's* agitation and asks what it is that harasses her. Her reply is preceded by the stern *Hunding* motive. She tells *Wotan* that she, as the protectress of the sanctity of the marriage vow, has heard *Hunding's* voice calling for vengeance upon the Wälsung twins. Her words, "His voice for vengeance is raised," are set to a phrase strongly suggestive of *Alberich's* curse. It seems as though the avenging Nibelung were pursuing *Wotan's* children and thus striking a blow at *Wotan* himself through *Fricka*. The Love motive breathes through *Wotan's* protest that *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* only yielded to the magic of the spring night. There is a superbly forceful strain when *Wotan* exclaims (page 91):

For when strong spirits are rampant
I rouse them ever to strife.

The wrathful phrase expressive of *Fricka's* anger, heard at the beginning of the scene, introduces her invective against the nuptial union of brother and sister, which reaches a stormy climax with her exclamation:

When was it heard of,
That brother and sister
Were lovers?

With the cool impudence of a nineteenth-century husband, who is bandying words in a domestic spat, *Wotan* replies:

Now it's been heard of!

Wotan argues that *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* are

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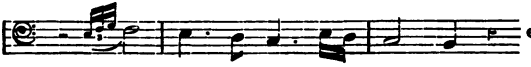
true lovers, and *Fricka* should smile instead of venting her wrath on them. The motive of the Love Song, the Love Motive and the caressing phrase heard in the love scene are beautifully blended with *Wotan's* words. In strong contrast to these motives is the music in *Fricka's* outburst of wrath, introduced by the phrase reflecting her ire, which is repeated several times in the course of this episode. This is followed at the words,

Why mourn I thus o'er virtue and vows,

by a phrase which has a touch of pathos, for she is complaining of *Wotan's* faithlessness. When she upbraids him for his lapses with *Erda*, the results of which were the Valkyrs, you hear the motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs. The passage concludes with a paroxysm of rage, *Fricka* bidding *Wotan* complete his work and let the Wälsungs in their triumph trample her under their feet. *Wotan* explains to her why he begat the Wälsung race and the hopes he has founded upon it. But *Fricka* mistrusts him. What can mortals accomplish that the gods, who are far mightier than mortals, cannot accomplish? *Hunding* must be avenged on *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. *Wotan* must withdraw his protection from *Siegmund*. Now appears a phrase which expresses *Wotan's* impotent wrath—impotent because *Fricka* brings forward the unanswerable argument that if the Wälsungs go unpunished by her, as guardian of the marriage vow, she, the Queen of the Gods, will be held up to the scorn of mankind.

MOTIVE OF WOTAN'S WRATH:

38.  etc.

Wotan would fain save the Wälsungs. But *Fricka's*

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argument is conclusive. He cannot protect *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*, because their escape from punishment would bring degradation upon the queen-goddess and the whole race of the gods, and result in their immediate fall. *Wotan's* wrath rises at the thought of sacrificing his beloved children to the vengeance of *Hunding*, but he is impotent. His far-reaching plans are brought to nought. He sees the hope of having the Ring restored to the Rhinedaughters by the voluntary act of a hero of the Wälsung race vanish. The curse of *Alberich* hangs over him like a dark, threatening cloud.

Brünnhilde's joyous shouts are heard from the height. *Wotan* exclaims that he had summoned the Valkyr to do battle for *Siegmund*. In broad, stately measures, *Fricka* proclaims that her honor shall be guarded by *Brünnhilde's* shield and demands of *Wotan* an oath that in the coming combat the *Wälsung* shall fall. *Wotan* takes the oath and throws himself dejectedly down upon a rocky seat. *Fricka* strides toward the back. She pauses a moment with a gesture of queenly command before *Brünnhilde*, who has led her horse down the height and into a cave to the right. It will be remembered that when in the beginning of this scene *Fricka* advanced toward *Wotan* we heard a phrase expressive of sullen dignity. The scene closes with this phrase, but now no longer sullen. It rises in proud beauty like a queenly woman exacting homage. This is one of those finely artistic touches in which Wagner is peerless.

I have purposely gone somewhat into the details of this scene because it is still so much misunderstood. Yet it is one of Wagner's finest conceptions, and as such it will doubtless be universally ranked at some future

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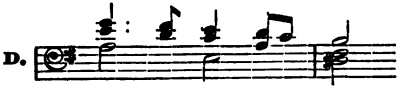
day. Aside from the contrast which *Fricka*, as the champion of virtue, affords to the forbidden revels of the spring night—a contrast of truly dramatic value—we witness the pathetic spectacle of a mighty god vainly struggling to avert ruin from his race. That it is to irresistible fate and not merely to *Fricka* that *Wotan* succumbs is made clear by the darkly ominous notes of *Alberich's* curse, which resound as *Wotan*, wrapt in gloomy brooding, leans back against the rocky seat, and also when, in a paroxysm of despair, he gives vent to his feelings, a passage which for overpowering intensity of expression stands out even from among Wagner's writings. The final words of this outburst of grief,

The saddest I among all men,

are set to this variant of the Motive of Renunciation; the meaning of this phrase having been expanded from the renunciation of love by *Alberich* to cover the renunciation of happiness which is forced upon *Wotan* by avenging fate:



Brünnhilde casts away shield, spear and helmet, and sinking down at *Wotan's* feet looks up to him with affectionate anxiety. Here we see in the Valkyr the touch of tenderness, without which a truly heroic character is never complete.

Musically it is beautifully expressed by the Love Motive, which, when *Wotan*, as if awakening from a reverie, fondly strokes her hair, goes over into the Siegmund Motive. It is over the fate of his beloved Wälsungs

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Wotan has been brooding. Immediately following *Brünnhilde's* words,

What am I were I not thy will,

is a wonderfully soft yet rich melody on four horns. It is one of those beautiful details in which Wagner's works abound, yet, although these details are as numerous as they are beautiful, they seem to have escaped the attention of a good many critics. Or have these critics made an effort not to perceive them?

In *Wotan's* narrative, which now follows, the chief of the gods tells *Brünnhilde* of the events which have brought this sorrow upon him, of his failure to restore the stolen gold to the Rhinedaughters; of his dread of *Alberich's* curse; how she and her sister Valkyrs were born to him by *Erda*; of the necessity that a hero should without aid of the gods gain the Ring and Tarnhelmet from *Fafner* and restore the Rhinegold to the Rhinedaughters; how he begot the Wälsungs and inured them to hardships in the hope that one of the race would free the gods from *Alberich's* curse; of a prophecy uttered by *Erda*, that the end of the gods would be wrought if *Alberich* could win a woman as wife and beget a son; that *Alberich* had won a wife and an heir was about to be born to him.

It will have been observed that a considerable portion of *Wotan's* narrative covers some of the events which were enacted in Rhinegold. Hence a portion of the narrative is unnecessary and therefore undoubtedly faulty from a purely dramatic standpoint. It may also be not unjustly questioned if in other portions the narrative does not go into details beyond the dramatic requirements. Both the scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* and

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the narrative are too long to be given in their entirety in a performance which begins as late as eight P. M. When, however, Wagner's works are performed as they are at Bayreuth, where the performances begin at four in the afternoon and there are long intermissions during which the listeners can saunter about the grounds surrounding the theatre, not a note should be omitted. There cannot be under such conditions the faintest suggestion of fatigue from an undue mental strain, even on the part of those who have become so accustomed to the insipidness of the old-fashioned opera that they are appalled at the mere thought—provided they retain the power of thinking—of mental effort in connection with a musico-dramatic work.

Whatever fault may be found with *Wotan's* narrative—or rather portions of it—from a purely dramatic point of view, it is musically most expressive from its first accents, uttered in a choked, suppressed voice, to its eloquent climax. The motives heard will be recognized, except one, which is new. This is expressive of the stress to which the gods are subjected through *Wotan's* crime. It is first heard when *Wotan* tells of the hero who alone can regain the ring. It is the MOTIVE OF THE GODS' STRESS:

39.

Excited by remorse and despair *Wotan* bids farewell to the glory of the gods. Then he in terrible mockery blesses the Nibelung's heir. Terrified by this outburst of wrath *Brünnhilde* asks what her duty shall be in the approaching combat. *Wotan* commands her to do *Fricka's* bidding and withdraw protection from *Sieg-*

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mund. In vain *Brünnhilde* pleads for the Wälsung whom she knows *Wotan* loves, and wished a victor until *Fricka* exacted a promise from him to avenge *Hunding*. But her pleading is in vain, *Wotan* is no longer the all-powerful chief of the gods—through his breach of faith he has become the slave of fate. Hence we hear, as *Wotan* rushes away, driven by chagrin, rage and despair, chords heavy with the crushing force of fate.

Slowly and sadly *Brünnhilde* bends down for her weapons, her actions being accompanied by the Valkyr Motive. Bereft of its stormy impetuosity it is as trist as her thoughts. Lost in sad reflections, which find beautiful expression in the orchestra, she turns toward the background. Suddenly the sadly expressive phrases are interrupted by the Motive of Flight. Looking down into the valley the Valkyr perceives *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* approaching in hasty flight. She then disappears in the cave. With magnificent crescendo the Motive of Flight reaches its climax and the two Wälsungs are seen through the natural arch. *Sieglinde* is hastening in advance of *Siegmund*. Seeking to restrain her flight, he clasps her tenderly. She stares wildly before her. Her terror of *Hunding's* pursuit has unsettled her reason. *Siegmund* speaks to her in gentle tones. Like a reminiscence of happier moments there is heard the wooing, caressing phrase (*c*) of the love scene in the first act. *Sieglinde* gazes with growing rapture into *Siegmund's* eyes and throws her arms around his neck. A fiercely impassioned phrase accompanies her impetuous action. Then as her mien grows mournful we hear the sadly reflective version of the Motive of Flight which preceded the Love Motive in the first act. "Away! Away!" she shrieks, suddenly starting up from her reverie.

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There is a dramatic change in the music which wildly follows her terrified ejaculations. There is noble calmness and determination in *Siegmund's* assuring words to her. They are introduced by the Motive of the Wälsung's Fortitude—that eloquent phrase, expressive of the fortitude with which the race has borne the struggle with adverse fate. Here *Siegmund* proposes to try the steel of his sword with *Hunding*. Then are heard in the distance the ominous notes of *Hunding's* horn, summoning his kinsmen to the pursuit of his wife and her lover. *Sieglinde* starts up in despair. Does not *Siegmund* hear the avenger's call, bidding the sleuth-hounds join him in the hunt for human prey? An agonizing shriek and *Sieglinde* grows suddenly rigid and stares vacantly before her, as if demented.

Eight chords of terrific force mark the climax of this scene.

In the insanity of her terror she believes that *Siegmund* is about to desert her, and with a wild cry of despair she throws herself upon his breast. A moment later she hears the distant notes of *Hunding's* horns, and starts up again in terror. She now believes that *Siegmund* has deserted her. Her agonized ejaculations, her heart-rending grief—these find wonderfully vivid expression. With a furious crescendo the climax of the scene is reached, and *Sieglinde* sinks fainting into *Siegmund's* arms.

Without releasing his hold upon her, *Siegmund* lets himself down upon a rocky seat, so that when he assumes a sitting posture her head rests on his lap. Silently he gazes upon her, and then, while the Love Motive whispers of memories of bliss, he presses a kiss upon her brow.

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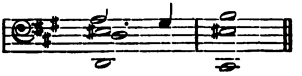
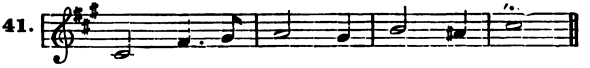
The MOTIVE OF FATE—so full of solemn import—is now heard :

40. 

Brünnhilde, leading her horse by the bridle, appears in the entrance of the cave, and advances slowly and solemnly to the front; then pauses and gazes upon *Siegmund*. While her earnest look rests upon him, there is heard the MOTIVE OF THE DEATH-SONG, a tristly prophetic strain :

41. 

Brünnhilde advances and then, pausing again, leans with one hand upon her charger's neck, and grasping shield and spear with the other, gazes upon *Siegmund*. Then there rises from the orchestra, in strains of rich, soft, alluring beauty, the Walhalla Motive. The Fate, Death-Song and Walhalla Motives recur, and *Siegmund*, raising his eyes and meeting *Brünnhilde's* look, questions her and receives her answers. The episode is so fraught with solemnity that the shadow of death seems to have fallen upon the scene. The solemn beauty of the music impresses itself the more upon the listener because of the agitated, agonized scene which preceded it. The alluring pleasures of Walhalla are depicted by the Walhalla Motive, beautifully blended with the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride, as *Brünnhilde* announces that many warriors will greet *Siegmund's* coming; by the Walhalla Motive alone when she tells him that he will meet his

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father in Walhalla; by the Freia Motive, borne airily upon the buoyant Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride, as she promises him that beauteous wish-maidens will wait upon him in the warriors' heaven. But these allurements are nought to him. "Shall *Siegmund* there embrace *Sieglinde*?" he asks; and when *Brünnhilde* answers in the negative he spurns the delights she has held out to him. Here he will stand and meet *Hunding*. *Brünnhilde* tells him that the sword upon which he relies will be shivered. He draws it to take *Sieglinde's* life and so pierce the fruit of their love. Moved to admiration by his heroic love, *Brünnhilde*, in a jubilant outburst, as though a sorrow had been lifted from her heart, proclaims that she will give victory to *Siegmund*.

When she has disappeared the scene gradually darkens. Heavy storm-clouds veil the crags and hide the peak from view. *Siegmund* tenderly soliloquizes over *Sieglinde*, and then kissing her gently upon the forehead, disappears among the clouds to meet *Hunding*. *Sieglinde* gradually regains her senses. The mountain is now veiled in black thunder-clouds. *Hunding's* voice is heard summoning *Siegmund* to combat. She staggers toward the peak. It is suddenly illumined by lightning. In the lurid light the combatants and *Brünnhilde* hovering above *Siegmund* are seen. As *Siegmund* aims a deadly stroke at *Hunding* a reddish glow diffuses itself through the clouds. In it *Wotan* appears. He interposes his spear. As the sword strikes it, *Siegmund's* weapon is shattered and *Hunding* thrusts his spear into the Wälsung's breast. *Sieglinde*, with a wild shriek, falls to the ground. *Brünnhilde* rushes down to her, lifts her upon her steed and urges the charger down the defile. With a gesture of angry contempt *Wotan* fells

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Hunding, and then, with a threat to visit upon *Brünnhilde* dire punishment for her revolt against his will, he disappears amid lightning and thunder. It is impossible in words to do justice to the savage beauty of this closing scene. The music is of the most dramatic character. The warring elements seem to add to the terror of this battle among the clouds. Amid these dark scenes *Alberich's* second victim finds his death.

Act III.

The third act opens with the famous ride of the Valkyrs, a number so familiar that detailed reference to it is scarcely necessary. The wild maidens of Walhalla coursing upon winged steeds through storm-clouds, their weapons flashing in the gleam of lightning, their weird laughter mingling with the crash of thunder as they bear slain warriors to the hero's heaven—such is the episode Wagner has depicted with marvelous art. The climax of barbaric joy is reached when the voices of six of the sisters unite in the shout, Hojotoho! Heiha! When eight of the Valkyrs have gathered upon the rocky summit of the mountain, which is their trysting-place, they see *Brünnhilde* approaching.

The Motive of the Gods' Stress is the chief theme heard in the ensuing scene when *Brünnhilde* tells of her disobedience to *Wotan* and begs the Valkyrs aid her to shield *Sieglinde.*

The latter, who has been lost in gloomy brooding, starts at her rescuer's supplication and in strains replete with mournful beauty begs that she may be left to her fate and follow *Siegmund* in death. The glorious prophecy of *Brünnhilde*, in which she now foretells the

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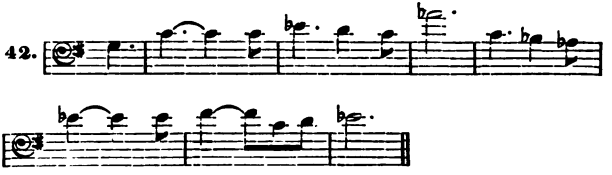
birth of *Siegfried* to *Sieglinde*, is based upon the SIEGFRIED MOTIVE.

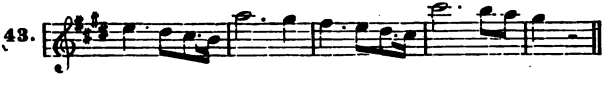
42. 

Sieglinde in joyous frenzy blesses *Brünnhilde* and hastens to find safety in a dense forest to the eastward, the same forest in which *Fafner*, in the form of a serpent, guards the Rhinegold treasures.

Wotan, in hot pursuit of *Brünnhilde*, reaches the mountain summit. In vain her sisters entreat him to spare her. He harshly threatens them unless they cease their entreaties, and with wild cries of fear they hastily depart. In the ensuing scene between *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde*, in which the latter seeks to justify her action, is heard one of the most beautiful themes of the cycle.

It is the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S PLEADING, which finds its loveliest expression when she addresses *Wotan* in the passage beginning:

Thou, who this love within my breast inspired.

43. 

In the scene there are many passages of rare beauty and many climaxes of great dramatic power. The principal motives employed therein the listener will readily

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recognize, so that it is only necessary to give in notation the SLUMBER MOTIVE:

44. etc.

This great scene between *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde* is introduced by an orchestral passage. The Valkyr lies in penitence at her father's feet. In the expressive orchestral measures the Motive of Wotan's Wrath mingles with that of Brünnhilde's Pleading. The motives thus form a prelude to the scene in which the Valkyr seeks to appease her father's anger, not through a specious plea, but by laying bare the promptings of a noble heart, which forced her, against the chief god's command, to intervene for *Siegmund*. The Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading is heard in its simplest form at *Brünnhilde's* words:

Was it so shameful what I have done,

and it may be noticed that as she proceeds the Motive of Wotan's Wrath, heard in the accompaniment, grows less stern until with her plea,

Soften thy wrath,

it assumes a tone of regretful sorrow.

Wotan's feelings toward *Brünnhilde* have softened for the time from anger to grief that he must mete out punishment for her disobedience. In his reply excitement subsides to gloom. It would be difficult to point to other music more touchingly expressive of deep contrition than the phrase in which *Brünnhilde* pleads that *Wotan* himself taught her to love *Siegmund*. It is here

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that the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading assumes the form in the notation given above. Then we hear from *Wotan* that he had abandoned *Siegmund* to his fate, because he had lost hope in the cause of the gods and wished to end his woe in the wreck of the world. The weird terror of the Curse Motive hangs over this outburst of despair. In broad and beautiful strains *Wotan* then depicts *Brünnhilde* blissfully yielding to her emotions when she intervened for *Siegmund*.

At last *Brünnhilde* seeks, with the prophecy of *Siegfried*, to move *Wotan* from his purpose, which is to punish her by causing her to fall into a deep sleep and thus become the prey of man. The motive of her pleading, reaching a magnificent climax, passes over to the stately Siegfried Motive as she prays *Wotan* to surround her sleeping form with horrors which only a true hero will dare strive to overcome. Let him conjure up fire 'round about her! *Wotan* raises her to her feet and gazes, overcome with deep emotion, into her eyes. After a majestic orchestral passage there begins *Wotan's* farewell to *Brünnhilde*, which in all musico-dramatic numbers for bass voice has no peer. Such tender, mournful beauty has never found expression in music—and this, whether we regard the vocal part or the orchestral accompaniment in which the Slumber Motive quoted above is prominent. *Wotan* gently leads *Brünnhilde* to a table rock, upon which she sinks. He closes her helmet and covers her with her shield. Then, pointing his spear toward a huge rock, he invokes *Loge*. Tongues of fire leap up from crevices in the rocks. Flickering flames break out on all sides. The forest glows with fire. The magic conflagration—wildly fluttering flames —surrounds *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde*. He gazes fondly

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upon her form and then vanishes among the flames. The Slumber Motive, the Magic Fire Motive and the Siegfried Motive combine to place the music of this scene with the most brilliant and beautiful portion of our heritage from the master-musician. Toward the close of this glorious finale we hear again the ominous muttering of the Motive of Fate. *Brünnhilde* may be saved from ignominy, *Siegfried* may be born to *Sieglinde*—but the crushing weight of the hand of fate rests upon the race of the gods.

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"SIEGFRIED."

The Nibelungs were not present in the dramatic action of "The Valkyr," though the sinister influence of *Alberich* shaped the tragedy of *Siegmund's* death. In "Siegfried" several characters of "The Rhinegold," who do not take part in "The Valkyr," reappear. These are the Nibelungs *Alberich* and *Mime*; the giant *Fafner*, who in the guise of a serpent guards the ring, the tarnhelmet and the Nibelung hoard in a cavern, and *Erda*. *Siegfried* has been born of *Sieglinde*, who died in giving birth to him. This scion of the Wälsung race has been reared by *Mime*, who is plotting to obtain possession of *Fafner's* treasures, and hopes to be aided in his designs by the lusty youth. *Wotan*, disguised as a wanderer, is watching the course of events, again hopeful that a hero of the Wälsung race will free the gods from *Alberich's* curse. Surrounded by magic fire, *Brünnhilde* still lies in deep slumber on the rock of the Valkyrs.

The vorspiel of "Siegfried" is expressive of *Mime's* planning and plotting. It begins with music of a mysterious, brooding character. Mingling with this is the Motive of the Hoard (No. 20), familiar from "The Rhinegold." Then is heard the Nibelung Motive (No. 18), and later, joined with it, the Motive of the Nibelung's Servitude (No. 3). After reaching a forceful climax the Motive of the Nibelung passes over to the Motive of the Ring (No. 6), which rises from pianissimo to a crash of tremendous power. The ring is to

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SIEGFRIED.

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be the prize of all *Mime's* plotting, when *Siegfried*, with a sword of *Mime's* forging, shall have slain *Fafner*. The felicitous use of the Sword Motive toward the close of the vorspiel will be readily recognized, as well as the aptness of the Nibelung and Servitude Motives as expressive of *Mime's* slavish labors, and gaining further point when joined by the Dragon or SERPENT Motive.

The three motives last named are prominent in the opening scene, which shows *Mime* forging a sword at a natural forge formed in a rocky cave. In a soliloquy he discloses the purpose of his labors and laments that *Siegfried* shivers every sword which has been forged for him. Could he (*Mime*) but unite the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword! At this thought the Sword Motive rings out brilliantly, and is jubilantly repeated, accompanied by a variant of the Walhalla Motive. For if the pieces of the sword were welded together, and *Siegfried* were with it to slay *Fafner*, *Mime* could surreptitiously obtain possession of the ring, slay *Siegfried*, rule over the gods in Walhalla and circumvent *Alberich's* plans for regaining the hoard. This last aspect of *Mime's* plan is musically expressed by the mocking phrase heard when in "The Rhinegold" *Wotan* and *Loge* made sport over the pinioned *Alberich*. This passage will be found on pages 8 and 9 of the Kleinmichel piano-score with words, beginning at bar 16 of the former and ending at 3 of the latter. The nine bars are an admirable example of the wealth of meaning in Wagner's music-drama scores, a meaning perfectly intelligible to anyone who approaches the subject in a serious, studious mood.

Mime is still at work when *Siegfried* enters, clad in a wild forest garb. Over it a silver horn is slung

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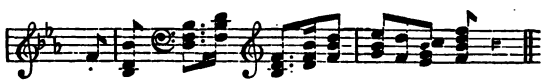
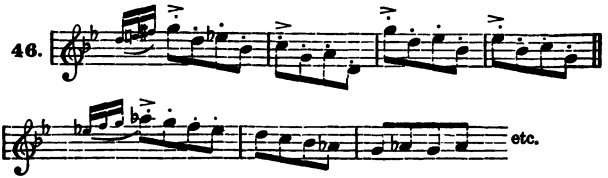
by a chain. The sturdy youth has captured a bear. He leads it by a bast rope, with which he gives it full play, so that it can make a dash at *Mime*. As the latter flees terrified behind the forge, *Siegfried* gives vent to his high spirits in shouts of laughter. Musically his buoyant nature is expressed by a theme inspired by the fresh, joyful spirit of a wild, woodland life. It may be called, to distinguish it from the Siegfried Motive, the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE FEARLESS.

45. 

It pervades with its joyous impetuosity the ensuing scene, in which *Siegfried* has his sport with *Mime*, until tiring of it, he loosens the rope from the bear's neck and drives the animal back into the forest. In a pretty, graceful phrase *Siegfried* tells how he blew his horn, hoping it would be answered by a pleasanter companion than *Mime*. Then he examines the sword which *Mime* has been forging. The Siegfried Motive resounds as he inveighs against the weapon's weakness, until, as he shivers the sword on the anvil, the orchestra with a rush takes up the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE IMPETUOUS.

46. 

This is a theme full of youthful snap and dash. It alternates effectively with a contraction of the Nibelung

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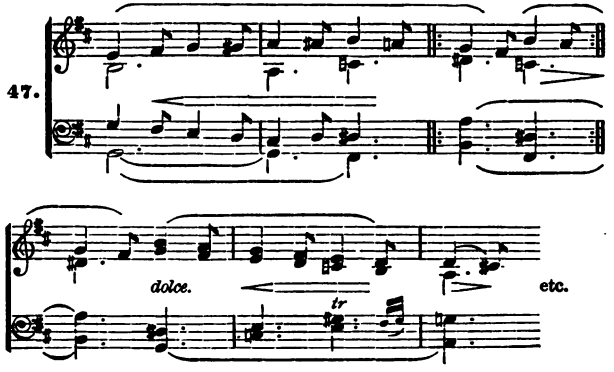
Smithy Motive, while *Siegfried* angrily scolds *Mime* and the latter protests. Finally *Mime* tells *Siegfried* how he tenderly reared him from infancy. The music here is as simple and pretty as a folk-song, for *Mime's* reminiscences of *Siegfried's* infancy are set to a charming melody, as though *Mime* were recalling to *Siegfried's* memory a cradle song of those days. But *Siegfried* grows impatient. If *Mime* tended him so kindly, why should *Mime* be so repulsive to him; and yet why should he, in spite of *Mime's* repulsiveness, always return to the cave? The dwarf explains that he is to *Siegfried* what the father is to the fledgling. This leads to a beautiful lyric episode. *Siegfried* says that he saw the birds mating, the deer pairing, the she-wolf nursing her cubs. Whom shall *he* call *Mother?* Who is *Mime's* wife? This episode is pervaded by a lovely, tender motive—the MOTIVE OF LOVE-LIFE:

47.



Mime endeavors to persuade *Siegfried* that he is his father and mother in one. But *Siegfried* has noticed

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that the young of birds and deer and wolves look like the parents. He has seen his features reflected in the brook and knows he does not resemble the hideous *Mime*. The notes of the Love-Life Motive pervade like woodland strains the musical accompaniment of this episode, in which, when *Siegfried* speaks of seeing his own likeness, we also hear the Siegfried Motive. The scene which follows is full of mournful beauty. *Mime*, forced by *Siegfried* to speak the truth, tells of *Sieglinde's* death while giving birth to *Siegfried*. Throughout this scene we find reminiscences of the first act of "The Valkyr," the Wälsung Motive, Motive of Sympathy and Love Motive. Finally, when *Mime* produces as evidence of the truth of his words the two pieces of *Siegmund's* sword, the Sword Motive rings out brilliantly. *Siegfried* exclaims that *Mime* must weld the pieces into a trusty weapon. Here (page 44, line 1) the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless assumes the form in which it is quoted on page 66. The Motive of Siegfried the Impetuous breaks in upon it and the Sword Motive throws its lustre over the music. Then follows Siegfried's Wander Song, so full of joyous abandon. Once the sword welded, he will leave the hated *Mime* forever. As the fish darts through the water, as the bird flies so free, he will flee from the repulsive dwarf. With joyous exclamations he runs from the cave into the forest.

In the scenes of which I have just spoken, the frank, boisterous nature of *Siegfried* is charmingly portrayed. His buoyant vivacity finds capital expression in the Motives of Siegfried the Fearless, Siegfried the Impetuous and his Wander Song, while the vein of tenderness in his character seems to run through the Love-Life Motive. His harsh treatment of *Mime* is not brutal; for

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Siegfried frankly avows his loathing of the dwarf, and we feel, knowing *Mime's* plotting against the young Wälsung, that *Siegfried's* hatred is the spontaneous aversion of a frank nature for an insidious one.

After *Siegfried* has disappeared in the forest, there is a gloomy soliloquy for *Mime*, interrupted by the entrance of *Wotan*, disguised as a wanderer. The ensuing scene is one of those lapses from dramatic effectiveness which we find in Wagner, and which surprise us so much, because Wagner was really an inspired dramatist, his works being constructed on fine dramatic lines, the action worked up to fine climaxes and the characters drawn in bold, broad strokes. But occasionally he has committed the error against the laws of dramatic construction of unduly prolonging a scene and thus retarding the dramatic action.

The scene between the *Wanderer* and *Mime* covers twenty-seven pages in the Kleinmichel piano-score with words, yet it advances us only one step in the dramatic action. As the *Wanderer* enters, *Mime* is in despair because he cannot weld the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword. When the *Wanderer* departs, he has prophesied that only he who does not know what fear is can weld the fragments, and that through this fearless hero *Mime* shall lose his life. This prophecy is reached through a somewhat curious process, which must be unintelligible to anyone who has not made a study of the libretto. The *Wanderer*, seating himself, wagers his head that he can correctly answer any three questions which *Mime* may put to him. *Mime* then asks: What is the race born in the earth's deep bowels? The *Wanderer* answers: The Nibelungs. *Mime's* second question is: What race dwells on the earth's back? The *Wanderer* replies:

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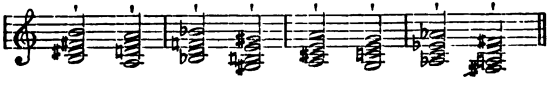
The race of the giants. *Mime* finally asks: What race dwells on cloudy heights? The *Wanderer* answers: The race of the gods. The *Wanderer*, having thus answered correctly *Mime's* three questions, now puts three questions to *Mime:* "What is that noble race which *Wotan* ruthlessly dealt with, and yet which he deemeth most dear?" *Mime* answers correctly: "The Wälsungs." Then the *Wanderer* asks: "What sword must *Siegfried* then strike with, dealing to *Fafner* death?" *Mime* answers correctly: "With *Siegmund's* sword." "Who," asks the *Wanderer*, "can weld its fragments?" *Mime* is terrified, for he cannot answer. Then *Wotan* utters the prophecy of the fearless hero. Whoever will read over this scene will observe that in *Wotan's* answers the story of "The Rhinegold" is partially retold, and that in *Mime's* answers we have a rehearsal of "The Valkyr." Of course the narrative repetitions of the plots of preceding music-dramas are undramatic. But I have an idea that Wagner, conjecturing that in many opera-houses his tetralogy would not be given as a whole, and that in some only one or two of the four music-dramas constituting it would be played, purposely introduced these narrative repetitions in order to familiarize the audience with what preceded the particular music-drama.

But if the scene is dramatically defective, it is musically most eloquent. It is introduced by two motives, representing *Wotan* as the *Wanderer*. The mysterious chords of the former seem characteristic of WOTAN'S DISGUISE.

48.



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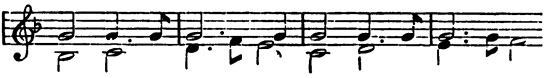
The latter, with its plodding, heavily-tramping movement, is the MOTIVE OF WOTAN'S WANDERING.

49. 

The third new motive found in this scene is characteristically expressive of the CRINGING MIME.

50. etc.

Several familiar motives from "The Rhinegold" and "The Valkyr" are heard here. The Motive of Compact (No. 9), so powerfully expressive of the binding force of law, the Nibelung (No. 18), Giants' (No. 13) and Walhalla (No. 8) motives from "The Rhinegold," and the Wälsungs' Heroism motives from the first act of "The Valkyr," are among these.

When the *Wanderer* has vanished in the forest *Mime* sinks back on his stool in despair. Staring after *Wotan* into the sunlit forest, the shimmering rays flitting over the soft green mosses with every movement of the branches and each tremor of the leaves seem to him like flickering flames and treacherous will-o'-the-wisps. We hear the Loge Motive (*Loge* being the god of fire) familiar from "The Rhinegold" and the finale of "The Valkyr." At last *Mime* rises to his feet in terror. He seems to see *Fafner* in his serpent's guise appoaching to devour him, and in a paroxysm of fear he falls with a shriek behind the anvil. Just then *Siegfried* bursts out of the thicket, and with the fresh, buoyant Wander-song and the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, the weird mystery

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which hung over the former scene is dispelled. *Siegfried* looks about him for *Mime* until he sees the dwarf lying behind the anvil.

Laughingly the young Wälsung asks the dwarf if he has thus been welding the sword. "The sword? The sword?" repeats *Mime*, confusedly, as he advances, and his mind wanders back to *Wotan's* prophecy of the fearless hero. Regaining his senses, he tells *Siegfried* there is one thing he has yet to learn, namely, to be afraid; that his mother charged him (*Mime*) to teach fear to him (*Siegfried*). At this point there is heard a combination of the Wälsung Motive and the Nibelung Motive in its contracted form as it previously occurs in this act. *Mime* asks *Siegfried* if he has never felt his heart beating when in the gloaming he heard strange sounds and saw weirdly glimmering lights in the forest. *Siegfried* replies that he never has. He knows not what fear is. If it is necessary before he goes forth in quest of adventure to learn what fear is he would like to be taught. But how can *Mime* teach him?

The Magic Fire Motive and Brünnhilde's Slumber Motive, familiar from Wotan's Farewell, and the Magic Fire scene in the third act of "The Valkyr" are heard here, the former depicting the weirdly glimmering lights with which *Mime* has sought to infuse dread into *Siegfried's* breast, the latter prophesying that, penetrating fearlessly the fiery circle, *Siegfried* will reach *Brünnhilde*. Then *Mime* tells *Siegfried* of *Fafner*, thinking thus to strike terror into the young Wälsung's breast. But far from it! *Siegfried* is incited by *Mime's* words to meet *Fafner* in combat. Has *Mime* welded the fragments of *Siegmund's* sword, asks *Siegfried*. The dwarf confesses his impotency. *Siegfried* seizes the fragments.

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He will forge his own sword. Here begins the great scene of the forging of the sword. Like a shout of victory the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless rings out and the orchestra fairly glows as *Siegfried* heaps a great mass of coal on the forge-hearth, and, fanning the heat, begins to file away at the fragments of the sword.

The roar of the fire, the sudden intensity of the fierce white heat to which the young Wälsung fans the glow—these we would respectively hear and see were the music given without scenery or action, so graphic is Wagner's score. The Sword Motive leaps like a brilliant tongue of fire over the heavy thuds of a forceful variant of the Motive of Compact, till brightly gleaming runs add to the brilliancy of the score, which reflects all the quickening, quivering effulgence of the scene. How the music flows like a fiery flood and how it hisses as *Siegfried* pours the molten contents of the crucible into a mold and then plunges the latter into water! The glowing steel lies on the anvil and *Siegfried* swings the hammer. With every stroke his joyous excitement is intensified. At last the work is done. He brandishes the sword and with one stroke splits the anvil from top to bottom. With the crash of the Sword Motive, united with the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, the orchestra dashes into a furious prestissimo, and *Siegfried*, shouting with glee, holds his sword aloft.

ACT II.

The second act opens with a darkly portentous vorspiel. On the very threshold of it we meet *Fafner* in his motive, which is so clearly based on the Giant Motive that there is no necessity for quoting it. Through themes which are familiar from earlier por-

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tions of the work, the vorspiel rises to a crashing fortissimo. The curtain lifts on a thick forest. At the back is the entrance to *Fafner's* cave, the lower part of which is hidden by rising ground in the middle of the stage, which slopes down toward the back. In the darkness the outlines of a figure are dimly discerned. It is the Nibelung *Alberich*, haunting the domain which hides the treasures of which he was despoiled. The Motive of the Nibelung's Malevolence accompanies his malicious utterances. From the forest comes a gust of wind. A bluish light gleams from the same direction. *Wotan*, still in the guise of a wanderer, enters.

The ensuing scene between *Alberich* and the *Wanderer* is, from a dramatic point of view, episodical. For this and the further reason that the reader will readily recognize the motives occurring in it, detailed consideration of it is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that the fine self-poise of *Wotan* and the maliciously restless character of *Alberich* are superbly contrasted. When *Wotan* has departed the Nibelung slips into a rocky crevice, where he remained hidden when *Siegfried* and *Mime* enter. *Mime* endeavors to awaken dread in *Siegfried's* heart by describing *Fafner's* terrible form and powers. But *Siegfried's* courage is not weakened. On the contrary, with heroic impetuosity, he asks to be at once confronted with *Fafner*. *Mime*, well knowing that *Fafner* will soon awaken and issue from his cave to meet *Siegfried* in mortal combat, lingers on in the hope that both may fall, until the young Wälsung drives him away.

Now begins the most beautiful lyric episode ever conceived. *Siegfried* reclines under a linden tree, and looks up through the branches. The rustling of the

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trees is heard. Over the tremulous whispers of the orchestra—known from concert programs as the Waldweben (forest-weaving)—rises a lovely variant of the Wälsung Motive. *Siegfried* is asking himself how his mother may have looked, and this variant of the theme which was first heard in "The Valkyr," when *Sieglinde* told *Siegmund* that her home was the home of woe, rises like a memory of her image. Serenely the sweet strains of the Love-Life Motive soothe his sad thoughts. The graceful outlines of the Freia Motive rise for a moment, and then *Siegfried*, once more entranced by forest sounds, listens intently. Birds' voices greet him. A little feathery songster, whose notes mingle with the rustling leaves of the linden tree, especially charms him.

The forest voices—the humming of insects, the piping of the birds, the amorous quiver of the branches—quicken his half-defined aspirations. Can the little singer explain his longing? He listens, but cannot catch the meaning of the song. Perhaps, if he can imitate it, he may understand it. Springing to a stream hard by, he cuts a reed with his sword, and quickly fashions a pipe from it. He blows on it, but it sounds shrill. He listens again to the bird. He may not be able to imitate its song on the reed, but on his silver horn he can wind a woodland tune. Putting the horn to his lips he makes the forest ring with its notes.*

The notes of the horn have awakened *Fafner*, who now crawls toward *Siegfried*. Perhaps the less said about the combat between *Siegfried* and *Fafner* the better. This scene, which seems very spirited in the libretto,

* The Motives are the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and the Siegfried Motive.

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is ridiculous on the stage. To make it effective it should be carried out very far back—best of all out of sight—so that the magnificent music will not be marred by the sight of an impossible monstrum. The music is highly dramatic. The exultant force of the Motive of Siegmund the Fearless, which rings out like a shout of barbaric joy as *Siegfried* rushes upon *Fafner*, the crashing chord as the serpent roars when *Siegfried* buries the sword in its heart, the rearing, plunging music as the monster rears and plunges with agony—these are some of the most graphic features of the score.*

Siegfried raises his fingers to his lips and licks the blood from them. Immediately after the blood has touched his lips he seems to understand the bird, which has again begun its song, while the forest voices once more weave their tremulous melody. The bird tells *Siegfried* of the ring and helmet and of the other treasures in *Fafner's* cave, and *Siegfried* enters it in quest of them. With his disappearance the forest-weaving suddenly changes to the harsh, scolding notes heard in the beginning of the Nibelheim scene in the "The Rhinegold." *Mime* slinks in and timidly looks about him to make sure of *Fafner's* death. At the same time *Alberich* issues forth from the crevice in which he was concealed. This scene, in which the two Nibelungs berate each other after the liveliest fashion, is episodical, being hardly necessary to the development of the plot. It is, however, capitally treated, and its humor affords a striking contrast to the preceding scenes.**

As *Siegfried* comes out of the cave and brings the ring

* Observe the significant occurrence of the Motives of the Curse, Siegfried and the Nibelungs' Malevolence in the accompaniment to *Fafner's* dying words.

** The Nibelung and Tarnhelmet Motives are prominent.

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and helmet from darkness to the light of day there are heard the Ring Motive, the Motive of the Rhinedaughters' Shout of Triumph and the Rhinegold Motive.

These, familiar from "Rhinegold," will be found quoted in the analysis of it. The forest-weaving again begins, and the bird bids the young Wälsung beware of *Mime*. The dwarf now approaches *Siegfried* with repulsive sycophancy. But under a smiling face lurks a plotting heart. *Siegfried* is enabled through the supernatural gifts with which he has become endowed to fathom the purpose of the dwarf, who, unconsciously discloses his scheme to poison *Siegfried*. The young Wälsung slays *Mime*, who, as he dies, hears *Alberich's* mocking laugh. *Alberich* has felled another victim. Though the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless predominates at this point, we also hear the Nibelung Motive and the Motive of the Curse—indicating the Nibelung's evil intent toward *Siegfried*.

Siegfried again reclines under the linden. His soul is tremulous with an undefined longing. As he gazes in almost painful emotion up to the branches and asks if the bird can tell him where he can find a friend, his being seems stirred by awakening passion.

The music quickens with an impetuous phrase (p. 228, l. 3), which seems to define the first joyous thrill of passion in the youthful hero. It is the Motive of LOVE'S JOY (51).

It is interrupted (p. 229, l. 2,) by a beautiful variant of the Motive of Love-life (No. 47), which continues until above the Forest-weaving the bird again thrills him with its tale of the glorious maid who has so long slumbered upon the fire-guarded rock. With the Motive of Love's Joy coursing through the orchestra, *Siegfried*, bids the feathery songster continue, and, finally, to guide him to *Brünnhilde*. In answer, the bird flutters from the linden branch, hovers

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over *Siegfried*, and hesitatingly flies before him until it takes a definite course toward the background. *Siegfried*

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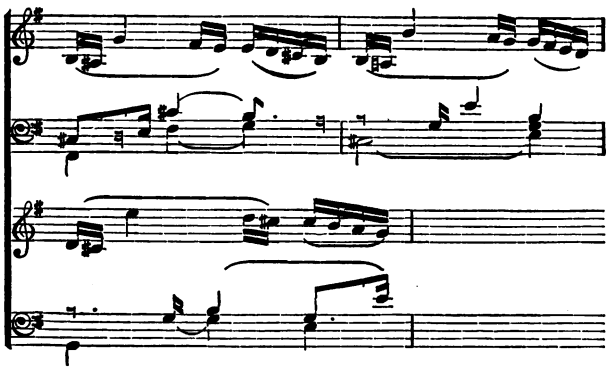

follows the little singer, the Motive of Love's Joy, succeeded by that of Siegfried the Fearless, bringing the act to a close.

ACT III.

The third act opens with a stormy introduction, in which the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs accompanies the Motive of the Gods' Stress (p. 239, l. 4, bar 3), the Compact and the Erda Motives (p. 239, l. 6, bar 3). The introduction reaches its climax with the MOTIVE OF THE DUSK OF THE GODS (No. 52 *infra*).

Then to the sombre, questioning phrase of the Motive of Fate, the action begins to disclose the significance of this *vorspiel*. A wild region at the foot of a rocky mountain is seen. It is night. A fierce storm rages. In dire stress and fearful that through *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* the

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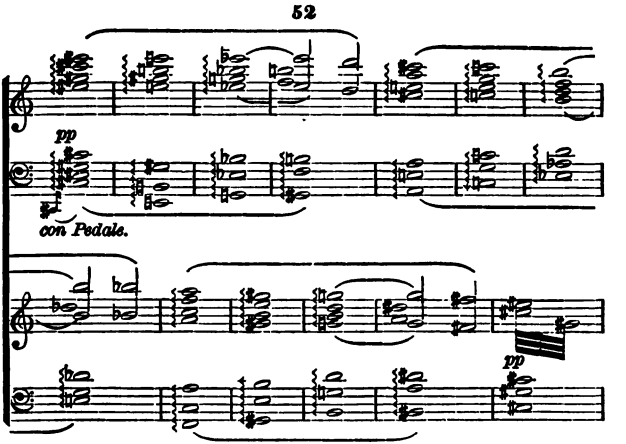
rulership of the world may pass from the gods to the human race, *Wotan* summons *Erda* from her subterranean dwelling. But *Erda* has no counsel for the storm-driven, conscience-stricken god. The chief motives which accompany the scene up to this point are familiar from earlier portions of the Cycle. They are, besides the Erda and Compact Motives, the Motive of the Dusk of the Gods (p. 244, l. 3,



bar 7), the Walhalla and Fate Motives, and those of the Renunciation, and Brünnhilde's Pleading.

The scene reaches its climax in *Wotan's* noble renunciation of the empire of the world. Weary of strife, weary of struggling against the decree of fate he renounces his sway. Let the era of human love supplant this dynasty, sweeping away the gods and the Nibelungs in its mighty current. For mournful dignity this episode is unrivalled. It is the last defiance of all-conquering fate by the ruler of a mighty

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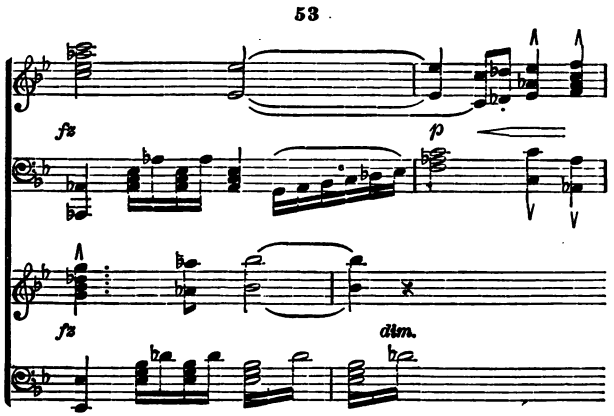
race. After a powerful struggle against irresistible forces, *Wotan* comprehends that the twilight of the gods will be the dawn of a more glorious epoch. A phrase of great dignity gives force to *Wotan's* utterances. It is the MOTIVE OF THE WORLD'S HERITAGE:



Siegfried enters, guided to the spot by the bird; *Wotan* checks his progress with the same spear which shivered *Siegmund's* sword. *Siegfried* must fight his way to *Brünnhilde*. With a mighty blow the young Wälsung shatters the spear and *Wotan* disappears 'mid the crash of the Motive of Compact—for the spear with which it was the chief god's duty to enforce compacts is shattered. Meanwhile the gleam of fire has become noticeable. Fiery clouds float down from the mountain. *Siegfried* stands at the rim of the magic circle. Winding his horn he plunges into the seething flames. Around the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and the Siegfried Motive flash the Magic

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Fire and Loge Motives. On p. 282, l. 3, bar 1 the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph (No. 5) will be found combined with the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and—beginning p. 284, l. 5, bar 3—there is an interesting sequence of the Siegfried Motive and the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph combined with the Slumber Motive. *Siegfried* is seen ascending the heights.

The flames having flashed forth with dazzling brilliancy gradually pale before the red glow of dawn till a rosy mist envelopes the scene. When it rises, the Valkyr's Rock and *Brünnhilde* in deep slumber under the fir tree, as in the finale of "The Valkyr," are seen. *Siegfried* appears on the height in the background. As he gazes upon the scene there are heard the Fate and Slumber Motives and then the orchestra weaves a lovely variant of the Freia Motive (No. 12). This is followed by the softly caressing strains of the Fricka Motive (No. 10). *Fricka* sought to make *Wotan* faithful to her by bonds of love, and hence the Fricka Motive in this scene does not reflect her personality but rather the awakening of the love which is to thrill *Siegfried* when he has beheld *Brünnhilde's* features. As he sees *Brünnhilde's* charger slumbering in the grove we hear the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride and, when his gaze is attracted by the sheen of *Brünnhilde's* armor, the theme of Wotan's Farewell (p. 62, *sup.*). Approaching the armed slumberer under the fir tree *Siegfried* raises the shield and discloses the figure of the sleeper, the face being almost hidden by the helmet.

He carefully loosens the helmet. As he takes it off *Brünnhilde's* face is disclosed and her long curls flow down over her bosom. *Siegfried* gazes upon her enraptured. Drawing his sword he cuts through the rings of mail on both sides, gently lifts off the corselet and greaves, and

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Brünnhilde, in soft female drapery, lies before him. He starts back in wonder. Notes of impassioned import—the Motive of Love's Joy—express the feelings that well up from his heart as for the first time he beholds a woman. The fearless hero is infused with fear by a slumbering woman. The Wälsung Motive, afterwards beautifully varied with the Motive of Love's Joy, accompanies his

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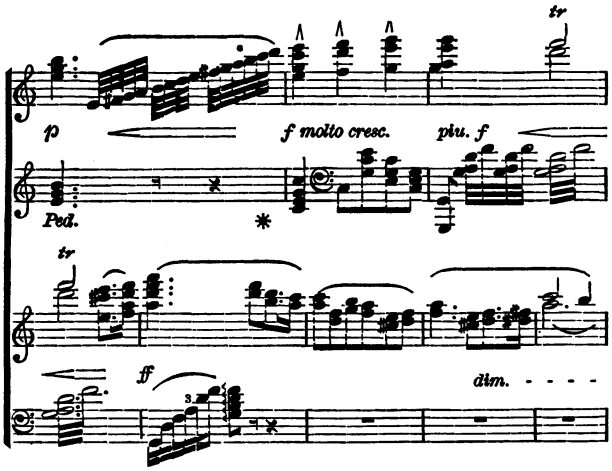

utterances, the climax of his emotional excitement being expressed in a majestic *crescendo* of the Freia Motive (p. 294, l. 4, bar 4, *et seq.*). A sudden feeling of awe gives him at least the outward appearance of calmness. With the Motive of Fate he faces his destiny; and then, while the Freia Motive rises like a vision of loveliness, he sinks over *Brünnhilde*, and with closed eyes presses his lips to hers.

Brünnhilde awakens. *Siegfried* starts up. She rises

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and with noble gesture greets in majestic accents her return to the sight of earth. Strains of loftier eloquence than those of her greeting have never been composed. *Brünnhilde* rises from her magic slumbers in the majesty of womanhood (No. 54 *supra*).

With the Motive of Fate she asks who is the hero who has awakened her. The superb Siegfried Motive gives back the proud answer. In rapturous phrases they greet one another. It is the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S GREETING (No. 55 *infra*,) which unites their voices in impassioned accents until, as if this motive no longer sufficed to express their ecstacy, it is followed by the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PASSION (No. 56 *infra*,) which, with the Siegfried Motive, rises and falls with the heaving of *Brünnhilde's* bosom.

These motives course impetuously through this scene. Here and there we have others recalling former portions of the cycle—the Wälsung motive (p. 303, l. 2, bar 7), when *Brünnhilde* refers to *Siegfried's* mother, *Sieglinde;* the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading when she tells him of her defiance of *Wotan's* behest (p. 305, l. 2, bar 3); a variant of the Walhalla Motive when she speaks of herself in Valhall (p. 313, l. 3, bar 7); and the Motive of the World's Heritage with which *Siegfried* claims her, this last leading over to a forceful climax of the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading, which is followed by a lovely, tranquil episode introduced by the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PEACE, which is succeeded (p. 319, l. 3, bars 1–5) by a motive, ardent yet tender—the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE PROTECTOR (Nos. 57 and 58 *infra*).

These motives accompany the action most expressively. *Brünnhilde* still hesitates to cast off forever the supernatural characteristics of the Valkyr and give herself up entirely to *Siegfried.* The young hero's growing ecstacy

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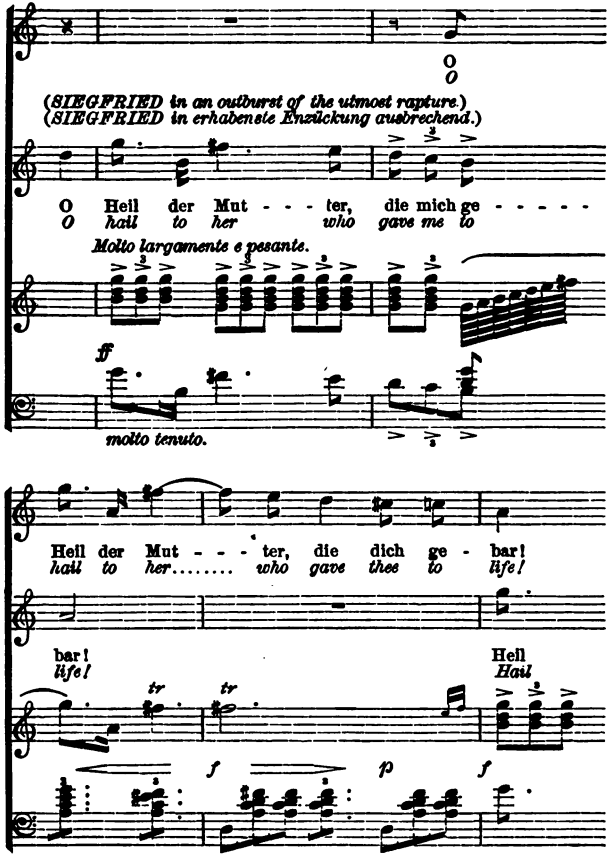

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finds expression in the Motive of Love's Joy. At last it awakens a responsive note of purely human passion in *Brünnhilde* and, answering the proud Siegfried Motive with

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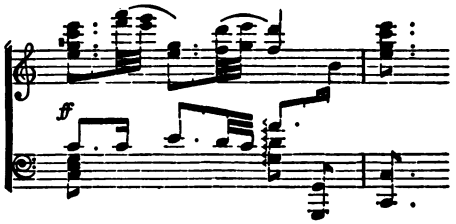

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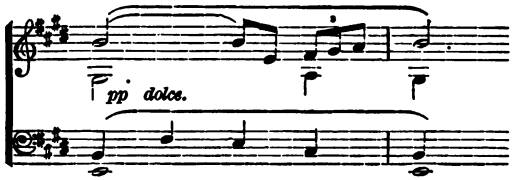

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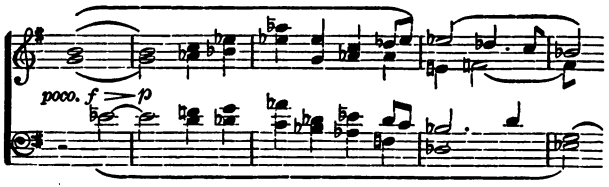

the jubilant Shout of the Valkyrs and the ecstatic measures of Love's Passion, she proclaims herself his. Then, as river and sea meet in turbulent billows, so meet the emo-

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tions of *Brünnhilde* and *Siegfried* in a surging flood of music. As she clasps him to her bosom his frame quivers with a joyous thrill and in a glorious burst of impassioned melody love rises to its rapturous climax. *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* are united! From the Valkyr, fearful of surrendering her virgin purity lest with it she should loose her goddess-like power, *Brünnhilde* has changed to a woman, swayed by woman's emotions and passions and with that complete faith in her lover which is perhaps the most sublime attribute of woman's love.

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SIEGFRIED'S DEATH.

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TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.

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"The Dusk of the Gods."

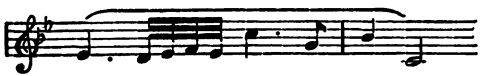
The "Dusk of the Gods" is in a prologue and three acts.

The Prologue.

The first scene of the prologue is a weirdly effective conference of the three gray sisters of fate—the *Norns* who wind the skein of life. They have met on the Valkyrs' rock and their words forebode the end of the Gods. At last the skein they have been winding breaks—the final catastrophe is impending. The chief Motives heard in this scene are the Erda and Fate Motives, with which latter it passes over to the second scene—*Siegfried's* farewell to *Brünnhilde.*

An orchestral interlude depicts the transition from the unearthly gloom of the *Norn* scene to break of day, the climax being reached in a majestic burst of music as *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde,* he in full armor, she leading her steed by the bridle, issue forth from the rocky cavern in the background. This climax owes its sublime eloquence to three motives—that of the Ride of the Valkyrs and two new motives, the one as lovely as the other is heroic, the former being the Brünnhilde Motive (59), the latter the Motive of Siegfried the Hero (60):

59



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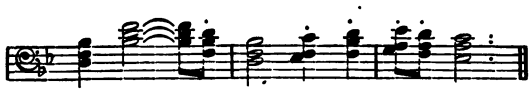

The Brünnhilde Motive seems to express the strain of pure, tender womanhood in the nature of the former Valkyr. This motive proclaims womanly ecstacy over wholly requited love, as distinguished from the barbaric frenzy of the wild horse-woman of the air, as *Brünnhilde* appeared to us in the first scene of the second act of "The Valkyr." The motive of Siegfried the Hero is clearly developed from the motive of Siegfried the Fearless. The fearless youth has developed into the heroic man. Its outburst from the orchestra in the dawn scene almost simultaneously with the first full effulgence of the day and the forthcoming of *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* from the cavern recall the psalmist's apostrophe of the sun:

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.

It represents the highest development of manhood. It is the most exaltedly heroic and at the same time, if the expression be allowable, the most muscular motive of the Cycle.

In this scene *Brünnhilde* and *Siegfried* plight their troth, and *Siegfried* having given to *Brünnhilde* the fatal ring and having received from her the steed Grane, which once bore her in her wild course through the storm clouds, bids her farewell and sets forth in quest of further adventure. This scene is one of Wagner's most beautiful creations. In addition to the two new motives already quoted there occurs a third—the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S LOVE.

When a woman of a strong, deep nature once gives her-

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self up to love her passion is as strong and deep as her nature. It is not the surface-heat passion that finds expression in the French drama and the Italian opera to which Wagner has given vent in the music of this scene. It is love rising from the depths of an heroic woman's soul. The grandeur of her ideal of *Siegfried*, her thoughts of him as a hero winning fame, her pride in his prowess, her love for one whom she deems the bravest among men, find magnificent expression in the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S LOVE:

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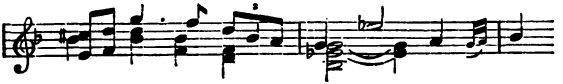

On p. 25, l. 2, bar. 2, occurs a contracted form of the Motive of Siegfried the Hero which is effectively used throughout the scene, especially in those portions where, after Brünnhilde has given Grane into his charge, it is heard in combination with the Motive of the Ride (p. 31, l. 4, bar 3, and p. 33, l. 3, bar 2). On the page last quoted this combination of motives is succeeded by a sturdy theme —a bar from Siegfried's wander-song in the first act of "Siegfried," which forms the basis of the impassioned phrases with which *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* bid one another farewell (p. 36, l. 1, beginning at bar 2). *Siegfried* disappears with the steed behind the rocks and *Brünnhilde* stands upon the cliff looking down the valley after him; his horn is heard from below and *Brünnhilde* with rapturous gesture waves him her farewell. The orchestra accompanies the action with the Brünnhilde Motive, the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, and finally with the theme of the love-duet with which "Siegfried" closed.

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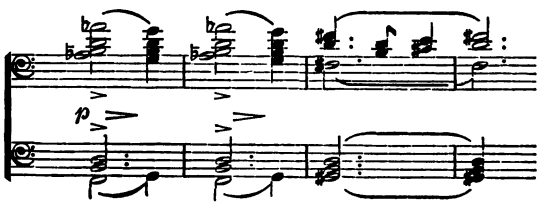
The curtain then falls and between the prologue and the first act we have an orchestral interlude descriptive of *Siegfried's* voyage down the Rhine to the castle of the Gibichungs where dwell *Gunther*, his sister *Gutrune*, and their half-brother *Hagen*, the son of *Alberich*. Through *Hagen* the curse hurled by *Alberich* in the "Rhinegold" at all into whose possession the ring shall come, is worked out to the end of its fell purpose—*Siegfried* is betrayed and destroyed and the rule of the gods brought to an end by *Brünnhilde's* expiation.

In the interlude between the prologue and the first act we first hear the brilliant Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and then the gracefully flowing Motives of the Rhine, and of the Rhinedaughters' Shout of Triumph with the Motives of the Rhinegold and Ring. *Hagan's* malevolent plotting, of which we are so soon to learn in the first act, is foreshadowed by the sombre harmonies which suddenly pervade the music—the Motive of Renunciation (p. 44, l. 4) and a motive based on that of the Tarnhelmet and expressive of the NIBELUNGS' POWER for evil:

62



ACT I.

This act opens in the hall of the Gibichungs, on the Rhine. *Gunther*, *Hagen* (*Alberich's* son) and *Gutrune*, the sister

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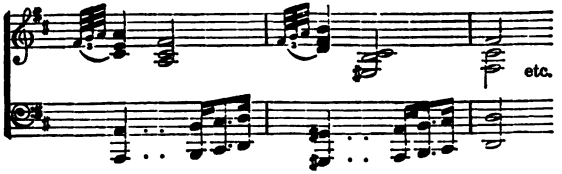
of *Gunther*, are plotting against *Siegfried*, of whose exploit in capturing the ring from *Fafner* and freeing *Brünnhilde*, *Hagen* knows. *Gunther* is disposed to be contented with what he has, but *Hagen* urges him to take a wife and procure a husband for *Gutrune*, suggesting that she give *Siegfried* a love-potion, which will excite him to love her and give up *Brünnhilde* to *Gunther*.

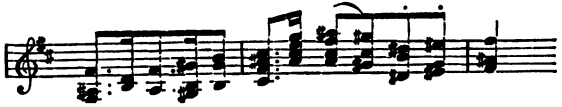
At the very beginning of this act the Hagen Motive is heard. Particularly noticeable in it are the first two sharp, decisive chords. They recur with frightful force in the third act when *Hagen* slays *Siegfried*. The HAGEN MOTIVE is as follows:

63



This is followed by the GIBICHUNG MOTIVE, the two motives being frequently heard in the opening scene:

64



Motives prominent in earlier scenes and easily to be recognized occur when *Hagen* describes the beauty of *Brünnhilde*, and the powers of *Siegfried* and suggests the infamous trick by which *Siegfried* is to be induced to win her for *Gunther*—the Motives of the Ride of the Valkyrs, of the Wälsungs' Heroism (p. 49, l. 1, bar 4), of Siegfried the Fear-

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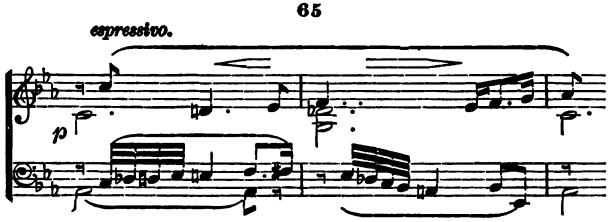
less (p. 49, l. 3, bar 1) and of the Ring, Renunciation and Gold, followed appropriately by the motive of the Nibelungs' Power through which *Siegfried's* destruction is to be compassed (p. 51, l., 1, bar 2—l. 4, bar 1). Added to these is the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE POTION which is to cause Siegfried to forget *Brünnhilde*, and conceive a violent passion for *Gutrune*:

65



The notes of *Siegfried's* horn are heard in the distance. As *Hagen* looks down the river and describes to *Gunther* how, with an easy stroke, the hero forces the boat against the swift current, we hear an effective combination of the Motives of Siegfried the Fearless and of the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph (p. 59, l. 1, bar 1); the Nibelung-son's boisterous greeting in answer to which *Siegfried* lays to with his boat is appropriately followed with tragic force by the Motive of the Curse. The Siegfried Motive imparts dignity to the meeting between the young hero and *Gunther*. When *Siegfried* asks *Hagen* how he recognized him although they had never met, the Motive of the Curse, prophetically significant, accompanies the query. At the hero's command to *Hagen* that he heedfully tend Grane the Brünnhilde Motive and the Motives of Brünnhilde's Love, and of the Ride of the Valkyrs are heard. After some parley between the men, *Gutrune*, who, at a gesture from

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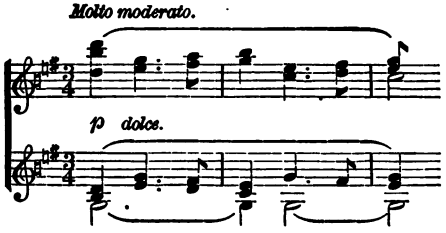
Hagen, had retired, re-enters bearing a drinking horn and approaching *Siegfried* bids him welcome in the GUTRUNE MOTIVE:

66



This is followed by the Motive of the Love Potion and then, after the orchestra has murmured memories of the love-scene in "Siegfried," the young hero drains the drinking horn to *Brünnhilde's* happiness. His manner suddenly changes. The Motive of the Love Potion becomes more animated. *Siegfried* regards *Gutrune* with growing admiration. He asks her of *Gunther* in marriage. The Love Potion, which he quaffed to *Brünnhilde*, has effaced all memory of her. This is made doubly apparent when *Gunther* asks in return for *Gutrune's* hand that *Siegfried*, disguised in the Tarnhelmet as *Gunther*, penetrate the fiery barrier and lead *Brünnhilde* as bride to him. *Siegfried* repeats mechanically, as if endeavoring to collect his thoughts, *Gunther's* references to the rock and fire, and even the mention of *Brünnhilde's* name awakens no responsive thrill in him. He offers to bring *Brünnhilde* to *Gunther* as bride and to unite himself with the Gibichung by the sacred compact of blood-brotherhood. Each with his sword draws blood from his arm which he allows to mingle with wine in a drinking-horn held by *Hagen;* each lays two

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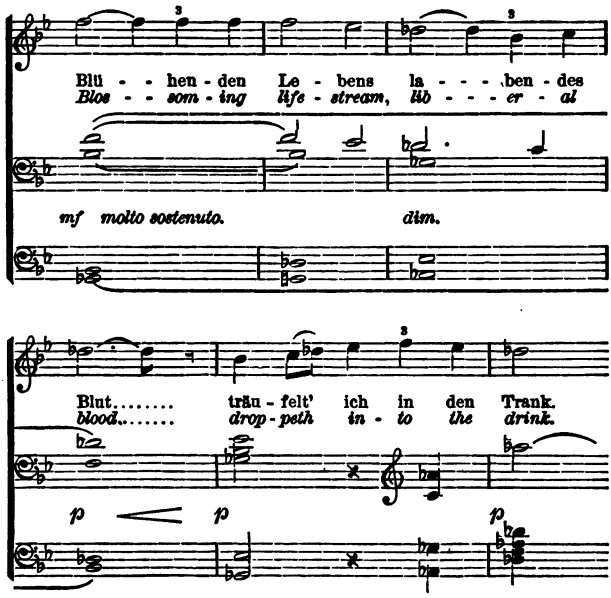
fingers upon the horn, and then, having pledged blood-brotherhood, drinks of the blood and wine. This ceremony is significantly introduced by the Motive of the Curse followed by the Motive of Compact (p. 75, l. 3, bar 5). Phrases of *Siegfried's* and *Gunther's* pledge are set to a new motive whose forceful simplicity effectively expresses the idea of troth. It is the MOTIVE OF THE VOW:

67



Abruptly following Siegfried's pledge:

Thus drink I thee troth,

are those two chords of the *Hagen* Motive which are heard

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again in the third act when the Nibelung has slain *Siegfried.*

Gunther and *Siegfried* enter the latter's boat, cast off and begin their journey to the Valkyr Rock where *Siegfried* under the influence of the magic Love Potion is to forcibly seize his own bride and deliver her to *Gunther.* The latter it should perhaps be stated here, is not aware of the union which existed between *Brünnhilde* and *Siegfried, Hagen* having carefully concealed this from his half-brother who hence believes that he will receive the Valkyr in all her goddess-like virginity.

When *Siegfried* and *Gunther* have departed and *Gutrune,* having sighed her farewell after her lover, has retired, *Hagen* broods with wicked glee over the successful inauguration of his plot. During a brief orchestral interlude a drop curtain conceals the scene which, when the curtain again rises, has changed to the Valkyrs' Rock where sits *Brünnhilde,* lost in contemplation of the Ring, while the Motive of Siegfried the Protector (No. 58) is heard on the orchestra like a blissful memory of the love-scene in "Siegfried."

Her rapturous reminiscences are interrupted by the sounds of an approaching storm and from the dark cloud there issues one of the Valkyrs, *Waltraute* who comes to ask of *Brünnhilde* that she cast back the ring into the Rhine and thus lift the curse from the race of gods. But Brünnhilde refuses:

More than Walhalla's welfare
More than the good of the gods,
The ring I guard.
From love I part not in life,
No gods can tear us asunder,
Soon shall Walhalla's walls
Be dust for the winds!

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It is dusk. The magic fire rising from the valley throws a glow over the landscape. The notes of *Siegfried's* horn are heard. *Brünnhilde* joyously prepares to meet him. Suddenly she sees a stranger leap through the flames. It is *Siegfried,* who through the Tarn-helmet (the motive of which, followed by the Gunther Motive dominates the first part of the scene) has assumed the guise of the Gibichung. In vain *Brünnhilde* seeks to defend herself with the might which the ring imparts. She is powerless against the intruder. As he tears the ring from her finger, the Motive of the Curse resounds with tragic import followed by trist echoes of the Motive of Siegfried the Protector and of the Brünnhilde Motive, the last being succeeded by the Tarnhelmet Motive expressive of the evil magic which has wrought this change in *Siegfried. Brünnhilde's* abject recognition of her impotence is accompanied by the restless, syncopated rhythm of the Nibelungs' Malevolence (No. 22), as she enters the cavern. Before *Siegfried* follows her he draws his sword Nothung (Needful) and exclaims:

> Now Nothung, witness thou, that chaste my wooing is;
> To keep my faith with my brother, separate me from his bride.

The music of this closing episode is forcefully graphic. It opens (*Piu animato,* p. 127) with the abrupt chords of the Hagen Motive. These and the Motive of Compact accompany the Sword Motive when *Siegfried* draws Nothung (p. 127, l. 2, bars 2 and 3). Phrases of the Pledge of Blood-brotherhood followed by the Brünnhilde, Gutrune and Sword Motives accompany his words. The abrupt Hagen chords lead to the Motives of the Nibelungs' Power and Tarnhelmet which pass into the Brünnhilde Motive. This rises for a moment triumphantly over the sombre, threatening harmonies of malevolence and sorcery. But it ends abruptly; and the chords so forcefully expressive of Hagen's

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vindictive power, with the Tarnhelmet Motive through which the thuds of the typical Nibelung rhythm resound, lead to the last crashing chord of this eventful act.

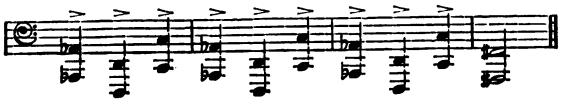
Act II.

The ominous Motive of the Nibelungs' Malevolence introduces the second act. The curtain rises upon the exterior of the hall of the Gibichungs. To the right is the open entrance to the hall; to the left the bank of the Rhine, from which rises a rocky ascent toward the background. It is night. *Hagen*, spear in hand and shield at side, leans in sleep against a pillar of the hall. Through the weird moonlight *Alberich* appears. He urges *Hagen* to murder *Siegfried* and to seize the ring from his finger. After hearing *Hagen's* oath that he will be faithful to the hate he has inherited, *Alberich* disappears. The weirdness of the surroundings, the monotony of *Hagen's* answers, uttered seemingly in sleep, as if, even when the Nibelung slumbers, his mind remained active, imbue this scene with awful mystery. New in this scene is the Murder Motive:

68

A charming orchestral interlude depicts the break of day. Its serene beauty is, however, broken in upon by the Motive of Hagen's Wicked Glee, which I quote, as it frequently occurs in the course of the succeeding events:

69



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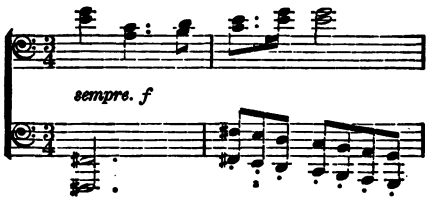
The Motive of Siegfried the Fearless accompanies *Siegfried*'s appearance. When *Gutrune* joins him and *Hagen*, and *Siegfried* relates how he won *Brünnhilde* for *Gunther* the Motive of the Tarnhelmet is frequently heard usually combined with some other Motive, f. i., with the Motive of Love's Joy at p. 144, l. 4, bar 1; with the Loge Motive (p. 145, l. 3, bar 2) and with the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs (p. 146, l. 1, bar 5). The appropriate use of these will readily be recognized from the context. *Siegfried* having led *Gutrune* into the hall, *Hagen* ascends a rocky height and loudly summons the vassals of Gibichung. During the ensuing bustling, noisy scene a variant of the Gutrune Motive (p. 151, l. 3, bar 2) is employed as a WEDDING SUMMONS:

70



A boisterous chorus of rejoicing, barbaric in its sturdy force, greets *Gunther* as he leads *Brünnhilde* from the boat, to the open space before the hall from which latter *Siegfried*, *Gutrune* and her train of women have issued. Soon, however, the shadow of impending tragedy darkens the scene.

When *Gunther* greets *Gutrune* and *Siegfried* with the Motive of the Wedding Summons, *Brünnhilde* raising her eyes perceives *Siegfried* on whom her astonished gaze remains riveted. The Motive of Siegfried the Hero, the Sword

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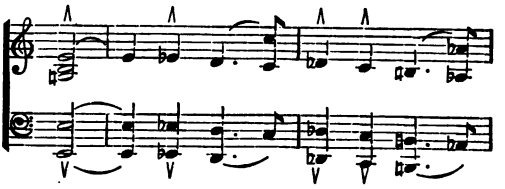
Motive and the Chords of the Hagen Motive emphasize with a tumultuous crash the dramatic significance of the situation. There is a sudden hush—*Brünnhilde* astounded and dumb, *Siegfried* unconscious of guilt quietly self-possessed, *Gunther*, *Gutrune* and the vassals silent with amazement—it is during this moment of tension that we hear the motive which expresses the thought uppermost in *Brünnhilde*, the thought which would find expression in a burst of frenzy were not her wrath held in check by her inability to quite grasp the meaning of the situation or to quite fathom the depth of the treachery of which she has been the victim. This is the MOTIVE OF VENGEANCE:

71



Tenderly the Gutrune Motive, or rather the version of it which formed the Wedding Summons, accompanies *Brünnhilde's*

Siegfried here? Gutrune?

and *Siegfried's* calm response:

Gunther's mild-eyed sister
Mate to me as thou to him.

But it is broken in upon by the now unbridled fury of the Motive of Vengeance (p. 181, l. 3, bar 1). Then, again dazed and still incredulous, *Brünnhilde* totters and is saved from falling only by *Siegfried* who supports her. Looking up to him as she did when his being thrilled with love of

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her, she tenderly asks him, while the Brünnhilde Motive adds to the pathos of the scene, if he does not recognize her. Suddenly she sees the ring upon his finger. The crashing chords of the Ring Motive are followed by the Motive of the Curse. *Brünnhilde* now realizes the enormity of *Siegfried's* treachery—it must have been he, not *Gunther*, who overcame her. She hurls her accusation at *Siegfried* with versions of the Motive of Vengeance in which the wrath of injured womanhood seems to attain its most frenzied expression (p. 185, l. 3, bars 1 and 2; and p. 186, l. 1, bar 3 and l. 2, bar 1). When she invokes the gods to witness her humiliation the Walhalla Motive is heard. This is followed (p. 190, l. 2, bar 6) by the touchingly pathetic Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading, which, however, soon gives way to the Motive of Vengeance when she calls upon the gods to give her vengeance commensurate with her wrong.

Brünnhilde accuses *Siegfried* of a threefold crime—of deserting her, of treachery toward *Gunther* in concealing from him that she had been his (*Siegfried's*) mate and of wronging *Gutrune* in wedding her when he had been already mated. *Brünnhilde*, knowing naught of the love-potion which has caused *Siegfried* to forget his night of love with her and to conceive a violent passion for *Gutrune*, thirsts for revenge upon him for his treachery. Her righteous wrath is intensified by jealousy of *Gunther's* sister for whom she believes herself to have been deserted. *Gunther* and *Gutrune* are also aroused, for *Hagen* carefully concealed from them all knowledge of the relations between *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde*, and they believe that *Siegfried* exercised the nuptial privilege the night, when disguised as *Gunther*, he overcame *Brünnhilde*—that he has been unfaithful to *Gutrune* and has broken his vow of Blood-brotherhood with *Gunther*.

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Siegfried takes oath that *Brünnhilde's* accusation is false; *Brünnhilde* swears that it is true. The taking of the oath is introduced by the Motive of Vengeance.

Siegfried swears upon *Hagen's* spear. Hence the fitness of the Murder Motive and of the sharp, decisive chords of the Hagen Motive. As *Brünnhilde* takes the oath the Valkyr music courses through the orchestra. All her wild Valkyr nature seems unloosed. *Siegfried's* oath allays *Gutrune's* suspicions. The tension of the scene is relaxed by the glad measures of the Wedding Summons. *Siegfried,* throwing his arm around *Gutrune,* draws her joyously with him into the hall whither they are followed by the vassals and women.

Brünnhilde, Hagen and *Gunther* remain behind. The Vengeance and Murder Motives and the Motive of the Vow dominate the ensuing scene. *Hagen* offers to be the executioner of *Brünnhilde's* and *Gunther's* vengeance. Music and action fairly seethe with excitement. In a trio through which fierce, revengeful passions surge, *Brünnhilde, Hagen* and *Gunther* swear vengeance upon *Siegfried.* From this outburst of wrath they turn to behold *Gutrune's* bridal procession issuing from the hall. The valley of the Rhine re-echoes with glad sounds—but it is the Murder Motive which brings the act to a close.

ACT III.

This act plays on the banks of the Rhine, where stands *Siegfried,* baffled in his pursuit of the game. *Hagen* has arranged that *Siegfried* shall be slain at a hunt and brought home as if wounded by a boar. While *Siegfried* stands on the bank of the Rhine, the Rhine-daughters appear to him and promise to bring game in his way if he will give them the ring. He refuses and they disappear, leaving him to

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his fate. For charming badinage this scene can be compared only with the opening scene in "The Rhinegold." The ripples of a lovely river do not exceed in grace the music with which Wagner has adorned this episode.

Distant hunting horns are heard. *Gunther*, *Hagen* and their attendants gradually assemble and encamp themselves. *Hagen* fills a drinking horn and hands it to *Siegfried* whom he persuades to relate the story of his life. This *Siegfried* does in a wonderfully picturesque, musical and dramatic story in which motives, often heard before, charm us anew.*

In the course of the narrative he refreshes himself by a draught from the drinking horn into which meanwhile *Hagen* has pressed the juice of an herb. Through this the effect of the Love Potion is so far counteracted that tender memories of *Brünnhilde* well up within him and he tells with artless enthusiasm how he won her. *Gunther* springs up aghast at this revelation. Now he knows that *Brünnhilde's* accusation was true.

Two ravens fly overhead. As *Siegfried* turns to look after them the Motive of the Curse resounds and *Hagen* plunges his spear into the young hero's back. *Gunther* and the vassals throw themselves upon *Hagen*. The Siegfried Motive, cut short with a crashing chord, the two murderous chords of the Hagen Motive forming the bass—and *Siegfried*, who with a last effort has heaved his shield aloft to hurl it at *Hagen*, lets it fall and, collapsing, drops upon it. So overpowered are the witnesses by the suddenness and enormity of the crime that after a few disjointed exclamations, they gather, bowed with grief, around *Siegfried*. *Hagen* with stony indifference turns away and disappears over the height.

* Nibelung, Sword, Dragon, Forest-Weaving, Tarnhelmet, Brünnhilde's Love, Brünnhilde, Magic Fire and Brünnhilde's Greeting.

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With the fall of the last scion of the Wälsung race we hear a new motive, simple yet indescribably fraught with woe—the DEATH MOTIVE (p. 296, l. 4, bars 1 and 2).

Siegfried supported by two men rises to a sitting posture and with a strange rapture gleaming in his glance intones his death-song. It is an ecstatic greeting to *Brünnhilde*. "Brünnhilde!" he exclaims, "thy wakener comes to wake thee with his kiss." The ethereal harmonies of the Motive of Brünnhilde's Awakening, the Motive of Fate, the Siegfried Motive swelling into the Motive of Love's Greeting and dying away through the Motive of Love's Passion to *Siegfried's* last whispered accents—"Brünnhilde beckons to me"—in the Motive of Fate—and *Siegfried* sinks back in death.

Full of pathos though this episode be it but brings us to the threshold of a scene of such overwhelming power that it may without exaggeration be singled out as the supreme musical-dramatic effect in all that Wagner wrought and hence the supreme effect in all music. *Siegfried's* last ecstatic greeting to his Valkyr bride has made us realize the blackness of the treachery which tore the young hero and *Brünnhilde* asunder and led to his death; and now as we are bowed down with a grief too deep for utterance—like the grief with which a nation gathers at the grave of its noblest hero—Wagner voices for us in music of overwhelmingly tragic power feelings which are beyond expression in human speech. This is not a funeral march, as it is often absurdly called—it is the awful mystery of death itself expressed in music.

Motionless with grief the men gather around *Siegfried's* corpse. Night falls. The moon casts a pale, sad light over the scene. At the silent bidding of *Gunther* the vassals raise the body and bear it in solemn procession over the

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rocky height. Meanwhile with majestic solemnity the orchestra voices the funeral oration of the "world's greatest hero." One by one, but tragically interrupted by the Motive of Death, we hear the motives which tell the story of the Wälsungs' futile struggle with destiny—the Wälsung Motive, the Motive of the Wälsung's Heroism, the Motive of Sympathy and the Love Motive, the Sword Motive, the Siegfried Motive and the Motive of Siegfried the Hero, around which the Death Motive swirls and crashes like a black, death-dealing, all-wrecking flood, forming an overwhelmingly powerful climax that dies away into the Brünnhilde Motive with which, as with a heart-broken sigh, the heroic dirge is brought to a close.

Meanwhile the scene has changed to the Hall of the Gibichungs as in the first act. *Gutrune* is listening through the night for some sound which may announce the return of the hunt.

Men and women bearing torches precede in great agitation the funeral train. *Hagen* grimly announces to *Gutrune* that *Siegfried* is dead. Wild with grief she overwhelms *Gunther* with violent accusations. He points to *Hagen* whose sole reply is to demand the ring as spoil. *Gunther* refuses. *Hagen* draws his sword and after a brief combat slays *Gunther*. The victorious Nibelung is about to snatch the ring from *Siegfried's* finger, when the corpse's hand suddenly raises itself threateningly, and all—even *Hagen*—fall back in consternation.

Brünnhilde advances solemnly from the back. While watching on the bank of the Rhine she has learned from the Rhine-daughters the treachery of which she and *Siegfried* have been the victims. Her mien is ennobled by a look of tragic exaltation. To her the grief of *Gutrune* is but the whining of a child. When the latter realizes that it was

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Brünnhilde whom she caused *Siegfried* to forget through the love-potion, she falls fainting over *Gunther's* body. *Hagen* leaning on his spear is lost in gloomy brooding.

Brünnhilde turns solemnly to the men and women and bids them erect a funeral pyre. The orchestral harmonies shimmer with the Magic Fire Motive through which courses the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs. Then, her countenance transfigured by love, she gazes upon her dead hero and apostrophizes his memory in the Motive of Love's Greeting. From him she looks upward and in the Walhalla Motive and the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading passionately inveighs against the injustice of the gods. The Curse Motive is followed (p. 326, l. 2, bar 4) by a wonderfully beautiful combination of the Walhalla Motive and the Motive of the Gods' Stress at *Brünnhilde's* words :

Rest thee! Rest thee! O, God!

For, with the fading away of Walhalla, and the inauguration of the reign of human love in place of that of lust and greed—a change to be wrought by the approaching expiation of *Brünnhilde* for the crimes which began with the wresting of the Rhinegold from the Rhine-daughters—*Wotan's* stress will be at an end. *Brünnhilde* having told in the graceful, rippling Rhine music how she learned of *Hagen's* treachery through the Rhine-daughters, places upon her finger the ring. Then turning toward the pyre upon which Siegfried's body rests, she snatches a huge firebrand from one of the men. Flinging it upon the pyre, which kindles brightly, she hurries toward Grane. As the moment of her immolation approaches the Motive of Expiation begins to dominate the scene (p. 333, l. 1, bar 2).

It wings its flight higher and higher until it seems to have soared to the height of emotional exaltation. *Brünnhilde*

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swings herself upon Grane's back, and with a mighty bound the steed bears his noble rider into the blazing pyre. Men and women in extreme terror crowd into the foreground. Suddenly the Rhine is seen to overflow, and borne on the flood the Rhine-daughters swim to the pyre and reclaim the ring. *Hagen* plunges madly after them into the flood and they draw him down with them. A deep glow illumines the heavens. It is the dusk of the gods. Walhalla is seen enveloped in flames. Once more the Walhalla Motive resounds majestically. But the Motive of Expiation breaks in upon it with overwhelming power. For the last time we hear the Siegfried Motive and then with the Motive of Expiation a new era—that of human love—rises in all its glory from the ruins of the empire of the gods.

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"TRISTAN AND ISOLDE."

THE libretto of "Tristan and Isolde" is almost as thoroughly Wagner's creation as the score; for, while there was much legendary material for Wagner to work upon,* he was obliged to remodel it thoroughly before it became available for a modern drama. In the old stories there is much diffuseness, and the main episodes are obscured by numerous incidents of knightly adventure, *Tristan's* exploits and fate being quite similar, except for a change of environment, to those of *Siegfried*. The similarity extends even to a victorious encounter with a dragon, *Tristan*, however, conquering an Irish instead of a German monster, being thus in a measure a forerunner of St. Patrick. Wagner has shorn the legend of all unnecessary incidents and worked over the main episodes into a concise, vigorous, swiftly moving drama, admirably adapted for the musico-dramatic stage. He

* Chiefly the epic poem by Gottfried von Strassburg (about 1210).

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shows keen dramatic insight in the manner in which he adapts the love potion of the legends to his purpose. In the legends the love of *Tristan* and *Isolde* is merely "chemical"—entirely the result of the philtre. Wagner, however, presents them from the outset as enamored of one another, so that the potion simply quickens a passion already active.

The plot of "Tristan and Isolde" is briefly as follows: *Tristan*, having lost his parents in infancy, has been reared at the court of his uncle, *Marke*, king of Cornwall. He has slain *Morold*, king of Ireland, and thus freed Cornwall from the tribute which it had been paying the Irish king. Dangerously wounded he places himself, disguised as *Tantris*, under the care of *Morold's* affianced, *Isolde*, who comes of a race skilled in magic arts. She discovers his identity; but, although she is aware that she is harboring the slayer of her affianced, she spares him and carefully tends him, for she has conceived a deep passion for him. *Tristan* also becomes enamored of her, but both deem their love unrequited. Soon after *Tristan's* return to Cornwall he is dispatched to Ireland by *Marke*, that he may win *Isolde* as Queen for the Cornish king.

The music-drama opens on board the vessel in which *Tristan* bears *Isolde* to Cornwall. Deeming her love for *Tristan* unrequited she determines to end her sorrow by quaffing a death potion; and *Tristan*, feeling that the woman he loves is about to be wedded to another, readily consents to share it with her. But *Brangäne*, *Isolde's* companion, substi-

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tutes a love potion for the death draught. This rouses their love to resistless passion. Not long after they reach Cornwall they are surprised in the castle garden by the King and his suite, and *Tristan* is severely wounded by *Melot*, one of *Marke's* knights. *Kurwenal*, *Tristan's* faithful retainer, bears him to his native place, Kareol. Hither *Isolde* follows him, arriving in time to fold him in her arms as he expires. She breathes her last over his corpse.

THE VORSPIEL.

The music of "Tristan and Isolde" is, above all, the music of passion. Love, excited by the arts of sorcery to the highest pitch of erotic rapture, seeks only to gratify itself, reckless of all consequences. The vague, sensuous yearning of the lovers, hesitating to express itself, is roused to an unrestrained avowal of their passion by the love potion; they abandon themselves to their ecstasy—and their fate is death. So much of the drama as precedes the drinking of the potion is, in a measure, narrative and explanatory; from the moment *Tristan* and *Isolde* share the goblet drama and music tell the story of love and death.

The magic philtre being therefore the excitant in this story of rapture and gloom, the *Vorspiel* opens most fittingly with a motive which seems to express the incipient effect of the potion upon *Tristan* and *Isolde*. It clearly can be divided into two parts (1 A

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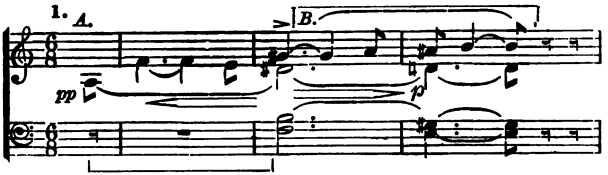
and B), one descending, the other ascending chromatically. The potion overcomes the restraining influence of duty in two beings and leaves them at the mercy of their passions. The first part, with its descending chromatics, is pervaded by a certain *triste* mood as if *Tristan* were still vaguely forewarned by his conscience of the impending tragedy. The second soars ecstatically upward. It is the woman yielding unquestioningly to the rapture of requited love. Indeed, the two phrases of this theme are so distinct that they may be considered two separate motives. Therefore, while the union of these parts may be called the Motive of the Love Potion, or, as Wolzogen calls it, of Yearning, it seems best to divide it into the TRISTAN and ISOLDE MOTIVES (1 A and B):



Thus they stand not only for the philtre, but also for the man and woman, whose moral sense it overpowers.

The two motives having been twice repeated, there is a *fermate*. Then the *Isolde* motive alone is heard, so that the attention of the hearer is fixed upon it. For in this tragedy, as in that of Eden, it is the woman who takes the first decisive step. After another *fermate*, the last two notes of the *Isolde* motive are twice

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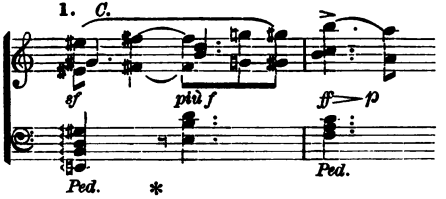
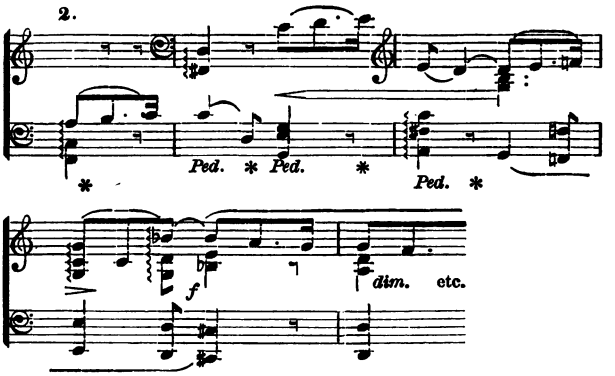
repeated, dying away to *pp*. Then a variation of the *Isolde* motive



leads with an impassioned upward sweep from *f* to *ff* into another version, full of sensuous yearning, and distinct enough to form a new motive, the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE GLANCE:



This occurs again and again in the course of the *Vorspiel*. Though readily recognized, it is sufficiently varied with each repetition never to allow the emotional

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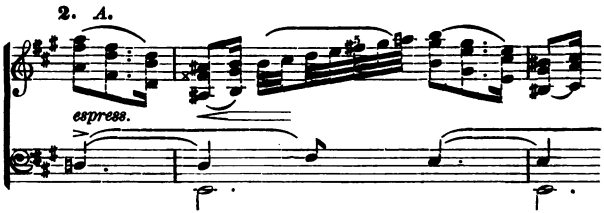
excitement to subside. In fact the *Vorspiel* gathers impetus as it proceeds, until, with an inversion of the Love Glance Motive, borne to a higher and higher level of exaltation by upward rushing runs of demi-semiquavers



it reaches its climax in a paroxysm of erotic transport, to die away with repetitions of the Tristan, the Isolde and the Love Glance Motives.

Act I.

The first act opens aboard the vessel in which *Tristan* is conveying *Isolde* to Cornwall.

The opening scene shows *Isolde* reclining on a couch, her face hid in soft pillows, in a tent-like apartment on the forward deck of a vessel. It is hung with rich tapestries, which hide the rest of the ship from view. *Brangäne* has partially drawn aside one of the hangings and is gazing out upon the sea. From above, as though from the rigging, is heard the voice of a young sailor singing a farewell song to his

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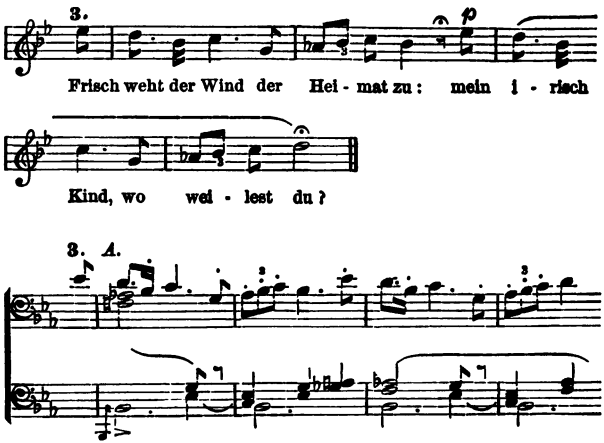
"Irish maid." It has a wild charm and is a capital example of Wagner's skill in giving local coloring to his music. The words, "Frisch weht der Wind der Heimath zu" ("The wind blows freshly toward our home") are sung to a phrase which occurs frequently in the course of this scene. It represents most graphically the heaving of the sea and may be appropriately termed the Ocean Motive. It undulates gracefully through *Brangäne's* reply to *Isolde's* question as to the vessel's course, surges wildly around *Isolde's* outburst of impotent anger when she learns that Cornwall's shore is not far distant, and breaks itself in savage fury against her despairing wrath as she invokes the elements to destroy the ship and all upon it. OCEAN MOTIVE :



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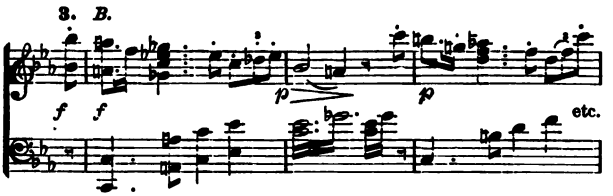

That it is her hopeless passion for *Tristan* which has prostrated *Isolde* appears in the Motive of the Love Glance, which accompanies her first exclamation as she starts up excitedly. During her invocation of the elements the Isolde Motive is also heard no longer, however, expressive of rapturous love, but rather of love turned to fierce hatred (p. 9, l. 2). When *Brangäne* seeks to soothe her and inquires the cause of her grief it is heard again with some of its original beauty restored, and the Motive of the Love Glance is also aptly introduced (p. 12, l. 1, b. 3).

Isolde calls upon *Brangäne* to throw aside the hangings, that she may have air. *Brangäne* obeys. The deck of the ship and, beyond it, the ocean are disclosed. Around the mainmast are sailors busily splicing ropes. Beyond them, on the after deck, are knights and esquires. A little aside from them stands *Tristan*, gazing out upon the sea. At his feet reclines *Kurwenal*, his esquire. The young sailor's voice is again heard.

As *Isolde* beholds *Tristan*, her anger at the thought that he whom she loves should be bearing her as bride to another vents itself in a wrathful phrase,

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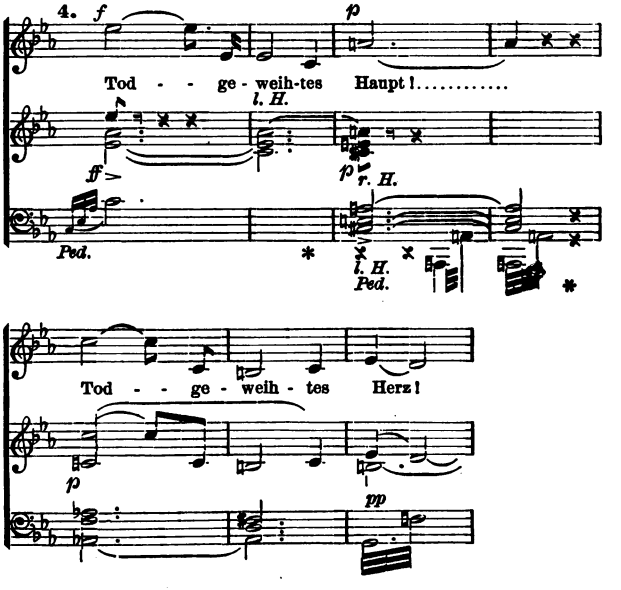
in which she invokes death upon him. This phrase is the MOTIVE OF DEATH·



The Motive of the Love Glance is heard as *Isolde* asks *Brangäne* in what estimation she holds *Tristan*, and is developed into a triumphant strain as *Brangäne* sings his praises. *Isolde* bids *Brangäne* command *Tristan* to come into her presence. This command is given with the Motive of Death, for it is their mutual death *Isolde* wishes to compass. As *Brangäne* departs

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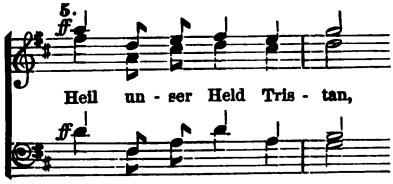
a graceful variation of the Ocean Motive is heard, the bass marking the rhythmic motions of the sailors at the sheets (p. 17, l. 2, b. 3 *et seq.*). In answer to *Brangäne*, *Tristan* refuses to leave the helm. *Brangäne* repeats *Isolde's* command. *Kurwenal* answers in deft measures in praise of *Tristan*. Knights, esquires and sailors repeat the refrain, the boisterous measures—"Hail to our brave *Tristan!*" form the TRISTAN CALL:



When *Brangäne* has returned to *Isolde*, the latter's wrath and grief at *Kurwenal's* taunts find vent in a narrative in which she tells *Brangäne* that once a wounded knight calling himself *Tantris* landed on Ireland's shore to seek her healing art. Into a niche in his sword she fitted a sword splinter she had found imbedded in the head of *Morold*, which had been sent to her in mockery after he had been slain in a combat with the Cornish foe. She brandished the sword over the knight, whom thus by his weapon she knew to be *Tristan*, her betrothed's slayer. But *Tristan's* glance fell upon her: under its spell she was powerless. She nursed him back to health, and he vowed eternal gratitude as he left her. The chief theme of this nar-

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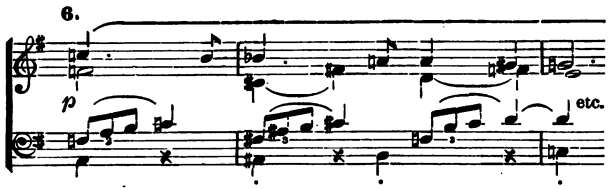
rative is obviously based upon the Tristan Motive (1 A):



Most beautiful is the transition of the phrase "His eyes in mine were gazing" (p. 29, l. 3, b. 1—l. 4, b. 5) to the Isolde (1 C) and Love Glance Motives. Another exquisite passage is that beginning: "Who silently his life had spared" (p. 35, l. 1). This is followed by the Tristan Call, *Isolde* seeming to compare sarcastically what she considers his betrayal of her with his fame as a hero; and with her outburst of wrath as she inveighs against his treachery in now bearing her as bride to *King Marke* the narrative reaches a superb climax. As *Brangäne* seeks to comfort *Isolde*, the latter, looking fixedly before her, confides, almost involuntarily, her love for *Tristan*.

"Where lives the man who would not love you?" asks *Brangäne*, then weirdly whispers of the love potion and takes a phial from a golden salver. The Motives of the Love Glance and of the Love Potion accompany her words and action. But *Isolde* seizes another phial, which she holds up triumphantly. It

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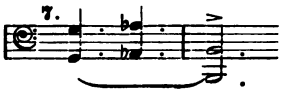
is the death potion. Here is heard an ominous phrase of three notes—the MOTIVE OF FATE:



A forceful orchestral climax, in which the demons of despairing wrath seem unloosed, is followed by the cries of the sailors greeting the sight of land. *Isolde* listens to them with growing terror. *Kurwenal* calls to her and *Brangäne* to prepare to soon go ashore. The brusque joy in the music accompanying his words forms an episode pleasantly contrasting with the excitement and mystery of the preceding scene. *Isolde* orders *Kurwenal* command *Tristan* to come into her presence; then bids *Brangäne* prepare the death potion. The Death Motive accompanies her final commands to *Kurwenal* and *Brangäne*, and the Fate Motive also drones threatfully through the weird measures.

Kurwenal announces *Tristan's* approach. *Isolde*, seeking to control her agitation, strides to the couch and, supporting herself by it, gazes fixedly at the entrance where *Tristan* remains standing. The motive which announces his appearance is full of tragic defiance, as if *Tristan* felt that he stood upon the thresh-

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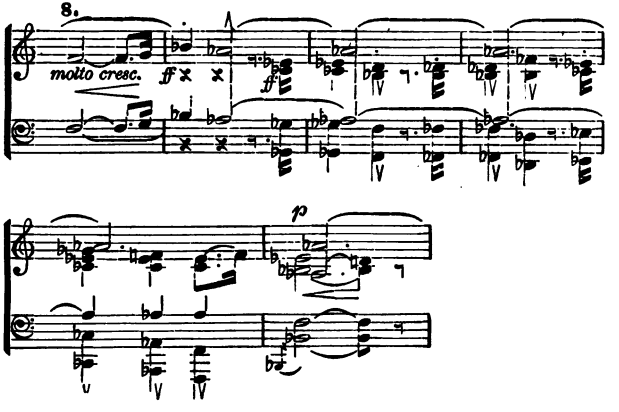
old of death, yet was ready to meet his fate without wincing:



It alternates (beginning p. 56, l. 5, b. 5) effectively with the Fate Motive and is used most dramatically throughout the succeeding scene between *Tristan* and *Isolde*. When she upbraids him, as she refers to her tender care of him, the chief theme of her narrative (No. 6) is heard. Sombrely impressive is the passage when he bids *Isolde* slay him with the sword she once held over him. The shouts of the sailors announce the proximity of land. In a variant of her narrative theme (p. 69, l. 5, b. 1, &c.) *Isolde* mockingly anticipates *Tristan's* praise of her as he leads her into *King Marke's* presence. At the same time she

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hands him the goblet which contains, as she thinks, the death potion and invites him to quaff it. Again the shouts of the sailors are heard, and *Tristan*, seizing the goblet, raises it to his lips with the ecstacy of one from whose soul a great sorrow is about to be lifted. When he has half emptied it, *Isolde* takes it from him and drains it. The vessel falls from her hand. *Tristan* and *Isolde* stand gazing upon one another. A strange tremor vibrates through their frames. Their eyes, set in the expectancy of death, now meet in rapturous glances. The Tristan and Isolde Motives tell of the emotions that are struggling for utterance. Then, with the impassioned variation heard in the *Vorspiel* (1 C) the Isolde Motive rises clear and bright and is followed by the Love Glance Motive. The effect is like that of the sudden breaking of a spell. *Isolde*, yielding to the rapture that quivers in her soul, sinks into *Tristan's* passionate embrace. The voices of the sailors break in upon their bliss, She starts from his arms. Then, as after a momentary calm a storm breaks with greater fury, their passion rages with demoniac energy. All the yearning and rapture of the motives heard in the *Vorspiel* mingle in the music of this scene, till *Brangäne* tears the lovers apart as the hangings are thrust aside, and knights, esquires and sailors are seen crowding the deck and jubilantly greeting *King Marke's* castle, which looks down from a rocky height. *Isolde* faints upon *Tristan's* breast, and amid the joyous shouts of the ship's folk, which almost drown the triumphant climax of the Isolde Motive, the act closes.

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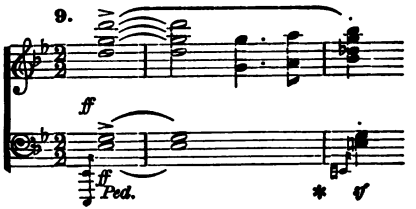
ACT II.

The introduction to the second act opens with a motive of peculiar significance. During the love scene the lovers inveigh against the day which jealously keeps them apart. They can meet only under the cover of darkness, and even then their joy is embittered by the thought that the blissful night will soon be succeeded by day. With them, therefore, the day stands for all that is inimical, night for all that is friendly. This simile is elaborated with considerable metaphysical subtlety, the lovers even reproaching the day with *Tristan's* willingness to lead *Isolde* to *King Marke*, *Tristan* charging that in the broad light of the jealous day his duty to win *Isolde* for his king stood forth so clearly as to overpower the passion for her which he had nurtured during the silent watches of the night. The phrase, therefore, which begins the act as with an agonized cry is the DAY MOTIVE:



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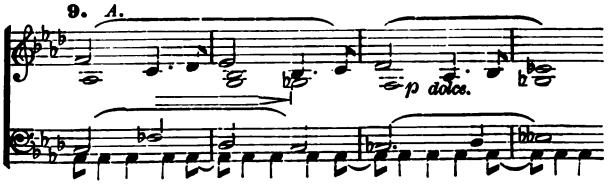
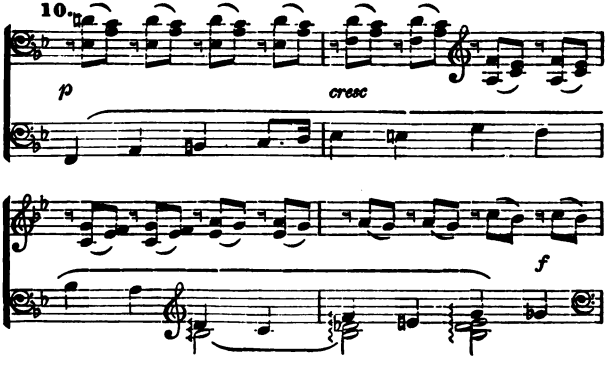
Derived from it, but breathing a soft, sensuous melancholy, is the NIGHT MOTIVE:



This latter does not, however, occur until later on in the act (p. 122, l. 3, b. 2–4); the Day Motive being followed by a phrase whose eager, restless measures graphically reflect the impatience with which *Isolde* awaits the coming of *Tristan*—the MOTIVE OF IMPATIENCE:



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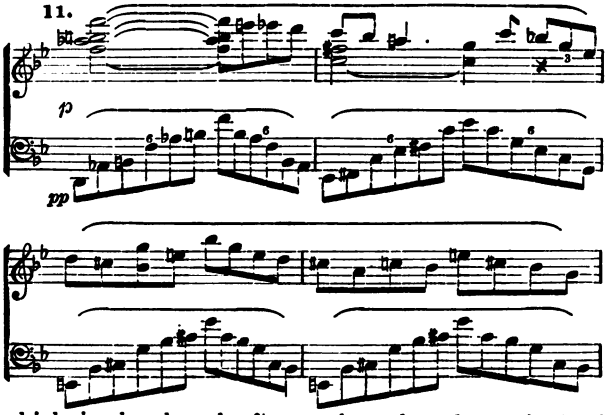
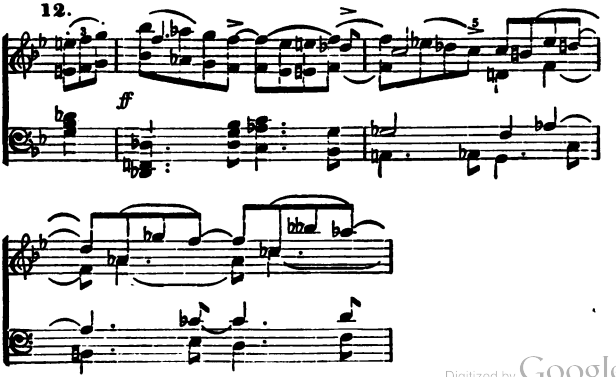
Over this there hovers (p. 85, l. 7, b. 1, &c.) a dulcet, seductive strain, the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE CALL :

11.



which is developed, after we have heard a variant of the Isolde Motive familiar from the first act (p. 86, l. 2, b. 3, &c.) into the rapturous measures of the MOTIVE OF ECSTASY :

12.



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These phrases having been repeated in the following order—Love Call, Isolde Motive, Motive of Ecstasy and Love Call—the curtain rises.

The scene of this act is the garden into which *Isolde's* apartment opens. It is a lovely summer night. Upon the steps leading to *Isolde's* apartment stands *Brangäne* looking in the direction from which hunting horns are heard. Against the open door of *Isolde's* apartment is a burning torch. The first episode of the act is one of those exquisite tone paintings in the creation of which Wagner is supreme. The notes of the hunting horns become more distant. *Isolde* enters from her apartment into the garden. She asks *Brangäne* if she cannot now signal for *Tristan*. *Brangäne* answers that the hunt is still within hearing. *Isolde* chides her—is it not some lovely, prattling rill she hears? The music is deliciously idyllic—conjuring up a dream picture of a sylvan spring night bathed in liquescent moonlight. *Brangäne* warns *Isolde* against *Melot;* but *Isolde* laughs at her fears. In vain *Brangäne* entreats her mistress not to signal for *Tristan*. The seductive measures of the Love Call and of the Motive of Ecstasy tell throughout this scene of the yearning in *Isolde's* breast. When *Brangäne* informs *Isolde* that she substituted the love potion for the death draught, *Isolde* scorns the suggestion that her guilty love for *Tristan* is the result of her quaffing the potion. This simply intensified the passion already in her breast. She proclaims this in the rapturous phrases of the Isolde Motive (1 B); and then, when she declares her fate to be in the hands

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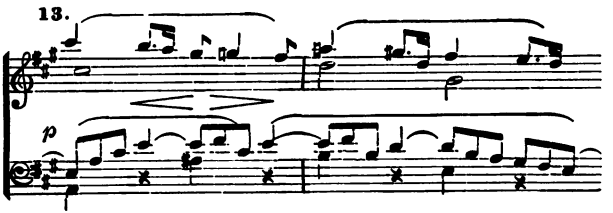
of the goddess of love, there are heard the tender accents of the LOVE MOTIVE :



In vain *Brangäne* warns once more against treachery. The Love Motive rises with ever increasing passion until *Isolde's* emotional exaltation finds expression in the Motive of Ecstacy as she bids *Brangäne* hie to the lookout and proclaims that she will give *Tristan* the signal by extinguishing the torch though in doing so she were to extinguish the light of her life itself. The Motive of the Love Call ringing out triumphantly accompanies her act, and dies away into the Motive of Impatience as she gazes down a bosky avenue through which she seems to expect *Tristan* to come to her. Then the Motive of Ecstasy and *Isolde's* rapturous gesture tell that she has discerned her lover; and as the Motive of Ecstasy reaches a fiercely impassioned climax *Tristan* and *Isolde* rush into each other's arms. The music fairly seethes with passion as the lovers greet one another, the Love Motive and the Motive of Ecstasy vying in the excitement of this rapturous meeting. Then begins the exchange of phrases in which the lovers pour forth their love for one another. This is the scene dominated by the

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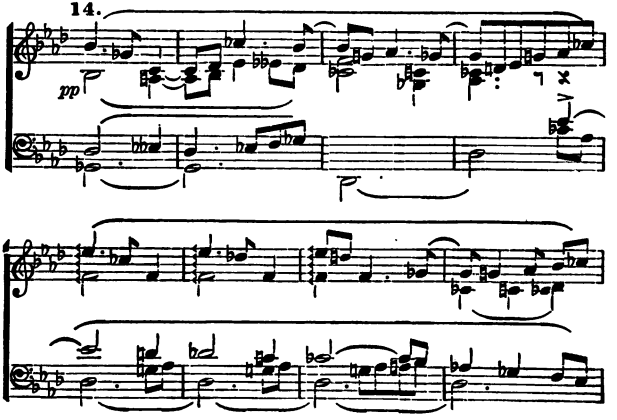
Motive of the Day, which, however, as the day sinks into the soft night, is softened (p. 122, l. 3, b. 2) into the Night Motive, which soothes the senses with its ravishing caress. This motive introduces and breathes through the throbbing rhythm and rapturous harmonies of the duet, "Oh sink upon us, Night of Love," and there is nothing in the realms of music or poetry to compare with these caressing, pulsating phrases in suggestiveness unless it be Swinburne's "In the Orchard."

The duet is broken in upon by *Brangäne's* voice warning the lovers that night will soon be over. The arpeggios accompanying her warning are like the first gray streaks of dawn. But the lovers heed her not. In a smooth, soft melody—the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PEACE—whose sensuous grace is simply entrancing, they whisper their love:



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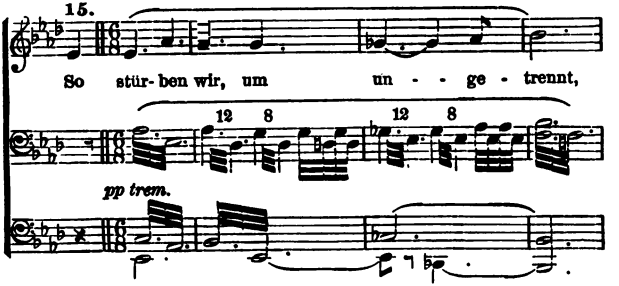
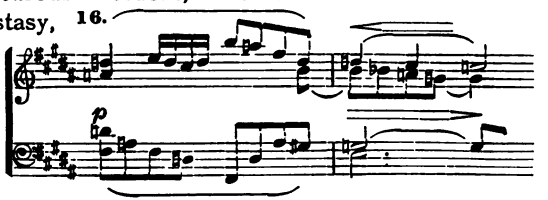
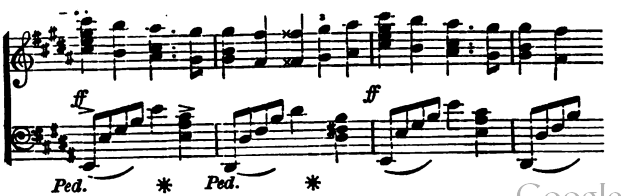
Could they but die an ecstatic love death while night still envelops them! Over an amorously quivering accompaniment there then rises the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE DEATH:



Brangäne calls again. But they love on, defying the approach of day, till their passion is apotheosized in a rapturous mordent, which soars into the Motive of Ecstasy,



the music throbbing and surging until, in an expanded form of the Ecstasy Motive,



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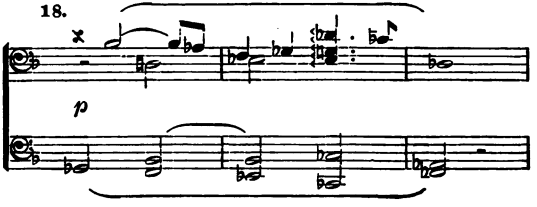
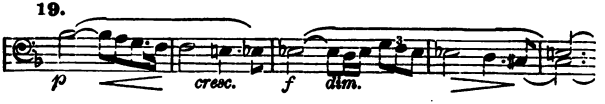
it reaches its climax in an uncontrollable outburst of transport.

A cry from *Brangäne*, *Kurwenal* rushing upon the scene calling to *Tristan* to save himself—and the lovers' ravishing dream is ended. Surrounded by the *King* and his suite, with the treacherous *Melot*, they gradually awaken to the terror of their situation. Almost automatically *Isolde* hides her head among the flowers, and *Tristan* spreads out his cloak to conceal her from view, while phrases reminiscent of the love scene rise like mournful memories.

Two new phrases occur in the following scene—the MARKE MOTIVE :



and the MOTIVE OF MARKE'S GRIEF :



It seems inexplicable, even in view of *Tristan's* former services to the *King*, that *Marke*, instead of drawing his sword and slaying the knight who betrayed his honor, should indulge in a philosophical inquiry concerning the cause and nature of *Tristan's*

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guilt. This is unquestionably an error from a dramatic point of view. We cannot sympathize with *Marke*, we cannot honor him for his forbearance. From the standpoint of manhood he is a garrulous professor of moral philosophy when he should be a swift avenger of his honor. Indeed it seems as if, had polygamy prevailed in ancient Cornwall, *Marke* might, on the principle of "turning the other cheek," have offered *Tristan* a further selection from among his wives. Theoretically such a character may be very beautiful and Christian-like, but dramatically it is weak and tedious—too good to be true. It is a relief when, *Marke* having finished his lecture, *Tristan* turns to *Isolde* and in beautifully pathetic accents asks if she will follow him to the country of his birth. The same mournful beauty pervades her reply that his home shall be hers. *Melot*, who seems deputed by Wagner to do what *Marke* should have done, draws his sword. *Tristan* bares his blade and rushes upon him, but in despair allows his sword to fall and receives *Melot's* thrust. *Isolde* throws herself upon her wounded lover's breast.

ACT III.

The introduction to this act opens with a variation of the Isolde Motive, sadly prophetic of the desolation which broods over the scene to be disclosed when the curtain rises. On its third repetition it is continued in a long drawn out ascending phrase, which seems to represent musically the broad waste

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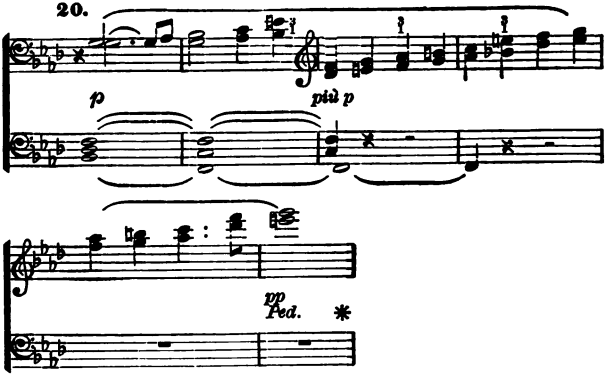
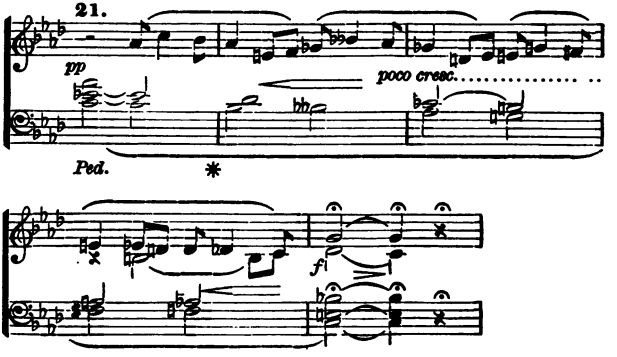
of ocean upon which *Tristan's* castle looks down from its craggy height.



It is broken in upon by the MOTIVE OF ANGUISH:



The whole passage appears to represent *Tristan* hopelessly yearning for *Isolde*, letting his fancy travel back over the watery waste to their last night

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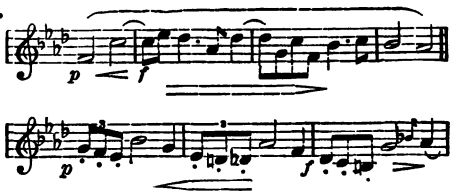
of love, and then giving himself up wholly to his grief.

The curtain rises upon the desolate grounds of Kareol, between the outer walls of *Tristan's* castle and the main structure, which stands upon a rocky eminence overlooking the sea. *Tristan* is stretched, apparently lifeless, under a huge linden tree. Over him bends the faithful *Kurwenal* in deep sorrow. A shepherd is heard piping a strain, whose plaintive notes harmonize most beautifully with the despairing desolation and sadness of the scene. It is the LAY OF SORROW:

22.



and conveys to *Kurwenal* the information that the ship he has dispatched to Cornwall to bear *Isolde* to Kareol has not yet hove in sight.

The Lay of Sorrow is a strain of mournful beauty, with the simplicity and indescribable charm of a folk song. Its plaintive notes cling like ivy to the gray and crumbling ruins of love and joy.

The *Shepherd* peers over the wall and asks if *Tristan* has shown any signs of life. *Kurwenal* gloomily replies in the negative, with the sad variant of the Isolde Motive (No. 20) and the Motive of Anguish, while the long drawn out phrase descriptive of the

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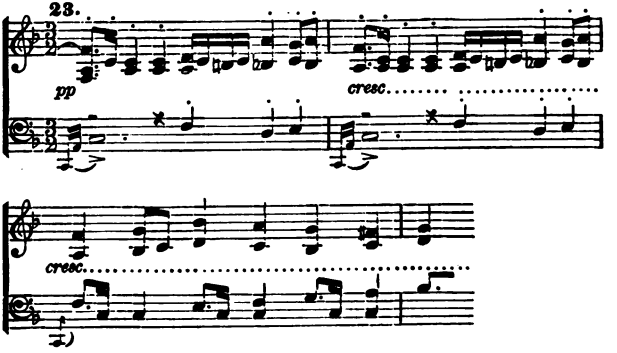
watery waste accompanies his gloomy query if no ship is in sight, and also the *Shepherd's* reply as he vainly scans the horizon. He then departs to continue his lookout, piping the sad refrain. *Tristan* slowly opens his eyes. "The old refrain; why wakes it me? Where am I?" he murmurs. *Kurwenal* is beside himself with joy at these signs of returning life. His replies to *Tristan's* feeble and wandering questions are mostly couched in a motive which beautifully expresses the sterling nature of this faithful retainer:



We also hear (p. 188, l. 5, b. 2; p. 189, l. 2, b. 2) a portion of the music of *Kurwenal's* reply to *Brangäne* in the first act.

Kurwenal's character is one of the noblest Wagner has drawn. *Tristan's* faithful knight is a *Wolfram von Eschenbach* in the rough. The very absence of the culture which refines the former makes *Kur-*

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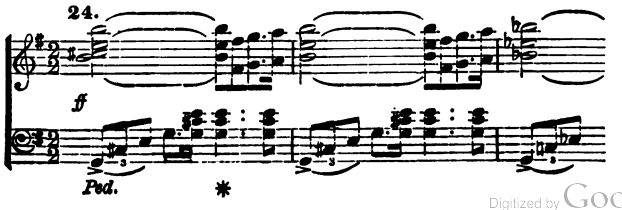
wenal's devotion the more touching. It is as pathetic as that of a great, shaggy dog.

Tristan now loses himself in memories of *Isolde*. At first her motive pervades the music and we also hear (p. 192, l. 2, b. 1, &c.) the phrases in which he asked her, after their discovery in the second act, if she would follow him. The Day Motive (No. 9) then dominates the score, broken in upon, however, with tragic force by the Death Motive (p. 194, l. 5, b. 1, &c.), until his yearning finds expression in the Love's Peace and Isolde Motives. The climax is reached when he curses the day whose light dispelled his and *Isolde's* happiness—the Day Motive, the Love Call, the Isolde Motive and the Motive of Ecstasy (p. 198, l. 3, b. 2, &c.) succeeding each other in depicting his anguish and the gradual exhaustion of his mental excitement.

Kurwenal seeks to comfort him with the news that he has sent a trusty man to Cornwall to bear *Isolde* to him that she may heal the wound inflicted by *Melot* as she once healed that dealt *Tristan* by *Morold*. The Isolde Motive and the theme of Isolde's Narrative in the first act appropriately accompany his words. In *Tristan's* jubilant reply, during which he draws *Kurwenal* to his breast, the Isolde Motive assumes a form in which it becomes a theme of joy :



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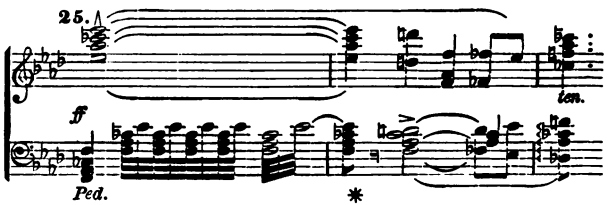
But it is soon succeeded by the Motive of Anguish, when *Tristan* raves of his yearning for *Isolde*. "The ship! the ship!" he exclaims. "*Kurwenal*, can you not see it?" The Lay of Sorrow gives the sad answer. It comes to *Tristan* with a double significance—as a memory of his mournful youth and as the hopeless reply to his question. It now pervades his sad revery until, when his mind wanders back to *Isolde's* tender nursing of his wound in Ireland, the theme of Isolde's Narrative is heard again. Finally his excitement grows upon him, and in a paroxysm of anguish bordering on insanity he even curses the love potion, a new motive, the LOVE CURSE,



being here introduced, the whole reaching its climax in the Day Motive.

Tristan sinks back apparently lifeless. But no—as *Kurwenal* bends over him and the Isolde Motive is breathed by the orchestra, he again whispers of *Isolde*. In ravishing beauty the Motive of Love's Peace caressingly follows his vision as he sees *Isolde* gliding toward him o'er the waves. With ever growing excitement he orders *Kurwenal* to the lookout to watch the ship's coming. What he sees so clearly cannot

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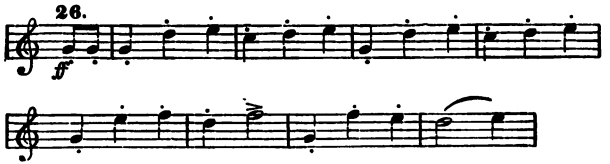
Kurwenal also see? Suddenly the music changes in character. The *Shepherd* is heard piping a joyous lay:



It pervades the music of *Tristan's* excited questions and *Kurwenal's* answers as to the vessel's movements. The faithful retainer rushes down toward the shore to meet *Isolde* and lead her to *Tristan*. The latter, his strength sapped by his wound, his mind inflamed to insanity by his passionate yearning, struggles to rise. That phrase in which the Vorspiel reached its climax (No. 2 A) courses through the orchestra. He raises himself a little. The Motive of Love's Peace, no longer tranquil, but with frenzied rapidity, accompanies his actions as he tears the bandage from his wounds and rises from his couch. He hears *Isolde's* voice. The ecstatic Love Call pours itself out over the music like a flood of sunlight. *Tristan* staggers into *Isolde's* arms. Gently she lays him down. The Motive of the Love Glance rises in mournful beauty and *Tristan*, his gaze resting rapturously upon *Isolde*, expires. She can hardly trust her senses, and when she realizes that he is dead, her grief finds heartrending expression in the Love-Death Motive. Tumultuous sounds are heard. A second ship has arrived. *Marke* and his suite have landed. *Tristan's* men, thinking the *King* has come in pursuit of *Isolde*, attack the new comers, *Kurwenal*

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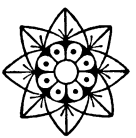
and his men are overpowered, and *Kurwenal*, having avenged *Tristan* by slaying *Melot*, sinks, himself mortally wounded, dying by *Tristan's* side. He reaches out for his dead master's hand, and his last words are: "Tristan, chide me not that faithfully I follow you." *Brangäne*, who has arrived with *Marke*, tells *Isolde* she has apprised the king that she prepared a love potion for her and *Tristan* and that *Marke* has come to forgive them. But *Isolde* heeds her not. With growing transport she gazes upon her dead lover. The Love-Death Motive rises softly over the orchestra till it swells into the impassioned phrases of the Motive of Ecstasy. Upon this latter the work reaches its climax with a stupendous crash of instrumental forces and with rapturous bliss in her last glance *Isolde* sinks down upon *Tristan's* corpse and expires. In the love-death for which they prayed *Tristan* and *Isolde* are united.



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EVA AND SACHS.

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"THE MASTERSINGERS OF NUREMBURGH."

WHILE Wagner's music dramas are all unmistakably Wagner, they are wonderfully varied, the style of the music in each adapting itself plastically to the character of the story. One cannot, for instance, imagine the music of "Tristan" wedded to the story of "The Mastersingers." A tragic passion, inflamed by the arts of sorcery, inspired the former; in the latter we have a thoroughly human tale set to thoroughly human music. Indeed, "The Mastersinger" music differs so much in character from that of the other music dramas that in none of these does one so thoroughly appreciate the extraordinary versatility of Wagner's genius. For, while "Tristan" and "The Ring of the Nibelung" are tragic and "Parsifal" is deeply religious, "The Mastersingers of Nuremburgh" is a comic work, even bordering in one scene on farce. Wagner, like Shakespeare, was equally at home in tragedy and comedy.

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The characters in "The Mastersingers" are the members of the art brotherhood, twelve in number, from which the work takes its title, chief among them being *Hans Sachs*, the cobbler poet, while *Pogner*, the goldsmith, and *Beckmesser*, the town clerk, are also prominent in the action; *Walther von Stolzing*, a young Franconian knight; *David*, *Sachs'* apprentice; *Eva*, *Pogner's* daughter, and *Magdalena*, *Eva's* nurse. The scene is laid in Nuremburgh in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Following is a brief synopsis of the plot. *Walther* is in love with *Eva*. Her father having promised her to the singer to whom at the coming midsummer festival the Mastersingers should adjudge the prize, it becomes necessary for *Walther* to seek admission to their art union. He is, however, rejected, his song violating the rules to which the Mastersingers slavishly adhere. *Beckmesser* is also instrumental in securing *Walther's* rejection. The town clerk is the "marker" of the union. His duty is to mark all violations of the rules against a candidate. *Beckmesser*, being a suitor for *Eva's* hand, naturally makes the most of every chance to put down a mark against *Walther*.

Sachs alone among the Mastersingers has recognized the beauty of *Walther's* song. Its very freedom from rule and rote charms him, and he discovers in the young knight's untrammeled genius the power which, if properly directed, will lead art from the beaten path of tradition toward a new and loftier ideal.

After *Walther's* failure before the Mastersingers he persuades *Eva* to elope with him. But at night,

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as they are preparing to escape, *Beckmesser* comes upon the scene to serenade *Eva*. *Sachs*, whose house is opposite *Pogner's*, has meanwhile brought his work bench out into the street and insists on "marking" what he considers *Beckmesser's* mistakes by bringing his hammer down upon his last with a resounding whack. The louder *Beckmesser* sings the louder *Sachs* whacks. Finally the neighbors are aroused. *David*, who is in love with *Magdalena* and thinks *Beckmesser* is serenading her, falls upon him with a cudgel. The whole neighborhood turns out and a general melée ensues, during which *Sachs* separates *Eva* and *Walther* and draws the latter into his house.

The following morning *Walther* sings to *Sachs* a song which has come to him in a dream, *Sachs* transcribing the words and passing friendly criticism upon them and the music. The midsummer festival is to take place that afternoon, and through a ruse *Sachs* manages to get *Walther's* poem into *Beckmesser's* possession, who, thinking the words are by the popular cobbler poet, feels sure he will be the chosen master. *Eva*, coming into the workshop to have her shoes fitted, finds *Walther* and the lovers depart with *Sachs*, *David* and *Magdalena* for the festival. Here *Beckmesser*, as *Sachs* had anticipated, makes a wretched failure, as he has utterly missed the spirit of the poem, and *Walther*, being called upon by *Sachs* to reveal its beauty in music, sings his prize song, winning at once the approbation of the Mastersingers and the populace. He is received into their art union and at the same time wins *Eva* as his bride.

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In the course of the musical analysis the scenes and the development of the plot are described in detail.

The Mastersingers were of burgher extraction and flourished in Germany, chiefly in the imperial cities, during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They did much to generate and preserve a love of art among the middle classes. The compositions of members of the corporations into which the Mastersingers were formed were judged according to a code of rules which distinguished by particular names thirty-two faults to be avoided. Scriptural or devotional subjects were usually selected and the judges or Merker (markers) were in Nuremburgh four in number, the first comparing the words with the Biblical text, the second criticising the prosody, the third the rhymes and the fourth the tune. He who had the fewest marks against him received the prize. The successors of the Mastersinger corporations are the Liederkränze and Sängerbunde and similar singing societies.

Hans Sachs, the most famous of the Mastersingers, born November 5, 1494, died January, 1576, in Nuremburgh, is said to have been the author of some 6,000 poems of very varied character. He was a cobbler by trade—

> Hans Sachs was a shoe-
> Maker and poet too.

A monument was erected to him in the city of his birth in 1874.

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Considering the libretti of Wagner's music dramas, independent of the music, that of "The Mastersingers" seems the most successful as a drama, probably because its plot turns upon human interests, and its characters are thus brought nearer our own point of view. In none of his other music dramas are there so many life-like figures, for in his legendary works his characters move in an atmosphere so remote that our hearts go out to the music rather than to the dramatis personæ. In "The Mastersingers," on the other hand, we recognize at once beings of our own world, and are hence keenly alive to their fortunes. Here is a simple, human love story, simply told, with many touches of humor to enliven it, and its interest enhanced by highly picturesque historical surroundings.

As a drama "The Mastersingers" is what the Germans call a Sittenbild, a perfect picture of the life and customs of Nuremburgh of the time in which the story plays. Wagner must have made careful historical researches, but this book lore is not thrust upon us. His modern muse has completely assimilated the historical material, and hence we have an art work so spontaneous that the method and manner of the art are lost sight of in one's admiration of their product. *Hans Sachs* himself could not have left a more faithful portrait of life in Nuremburgh in the middle of the sixteenth century than Wagner has given us.

"The Mastersingers" has a peculiarly Wagnerian interest. It is Wagner's protest against the narrow

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minded critics and the prejudiced public who so long refused him recognition. *Walther von Stolzing* is the incarnation of new aspirations in art; the champion of a new art ideal, and continually chafing under the restraints imposed by traditional rules and methods. *Hans Sachs* is a conservative, who is, however, while preserving what is best in art traditions, not averse to recognize what is beautiful in a new art form. He represents enlightened public opinion. *Beckmesser* and the other Mastersingers are the embodiment of rank prejudice—the critics. *Walther's* triumph is also Wagner's. Few of Wagner's dramatic creations equal in life-like interest the character of *Sachs*. It is drawn with strong, firm hand, and filled in with many delicately poetic touches. *Sachs'* lovable characteristics are referred to at various points in the musical analysis.

"The Mastersingers" was produced at Munich in June, 1868.

THE VORSPIEL.

The *Vorspiel* to "The Mastersingers" gives a complete musical epitome of the drama which is to unfold itself. It is full of life and action—pompous, impassioned and jocose in turn. There is nothing overwrought or morbid in it. Its sentiment and its fun are purely human—one is tempted to say, somewhat paradoxically, divinely human. Technically it has long been recognized as a masterpiece of workmanship.

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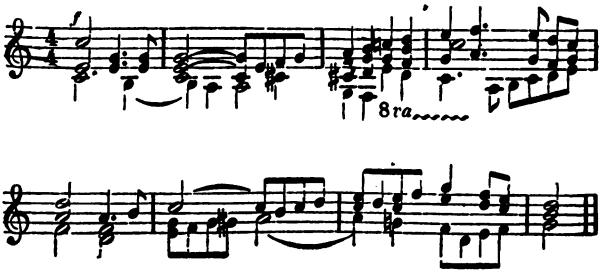
It opens with the pompous MOTIVE OF THE MASTERSINGERS:

1.



a theme which gives capital musical expression to the characteristics of these dignitaries. To describe men of their class the Germans have the admirable term *Biedermänner*, whose very sound conveys the idea of self sufficient but eminently worthy citizens who are slow to receive new impressions and do not take kindly to innovations. Our term of old fogy describes them imperfectly, as it does not allow for their many excellent qualities. They are slow to act, but if they are once aroused their ponderous influence bears down all opposition. At first an obstacle to genuine reform, they are in the end the force which pushes it to success. Thus there is in the Motive of the Mastersingers a certain ponderous dignity which well emphasizes the idea of conservative power.

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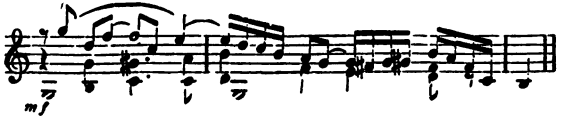
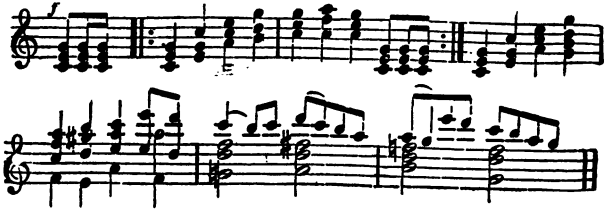
In great contrast to this is the LYRIC MOTIVE:

2.



which seems to express the striving after a poetic ideal untrammeled by old-fashioned restrictions, which are typified in this drama by the rules of the Mastersingers. But, as if the sturdy conservative forces were still unwilling to be persuaded of the worth of this new ideal, the impulsive *entrain* of the Lyric Motive is suddenly checked by the superb measures of the MASTERSINGERS' MARCH:

3.



in which the majesty of law and order finds eloquent expression. This is followed by a phrase of noble breadth and beauty, obviously developed from portions of the Motive of the Mastersingers, and so typical of the good will which should exist among the

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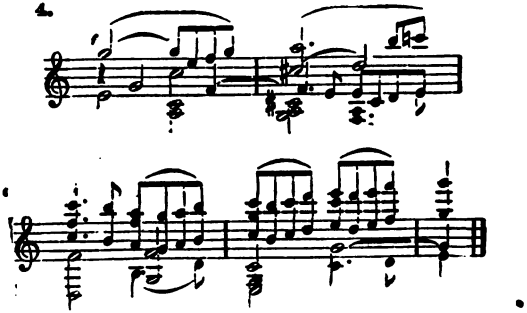
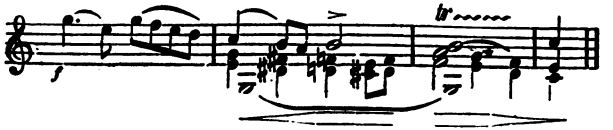
members of a fraternity that it may be called the MOTIVE OF THE ART BROTHERHOOD :

4.



It reaches an eloquent climax in the MOTIVE OF THE IDEAL :

5.



But opposed to this guild of conservative masters is the restless spirit of progress toward modern ideals. Hence, however stately the strains of the Mastersingers' March and of the Guild Motive, they are obliged to yield to a theme full of emotional energy and of much the same import as the Lyric Motive. *Walther* is the champion of this new ideal—not, however, from a purely artistic impulse, but rather through his love for *Eva*. Being ignorant of the rules and rote of the Mastersingers he sings, when he

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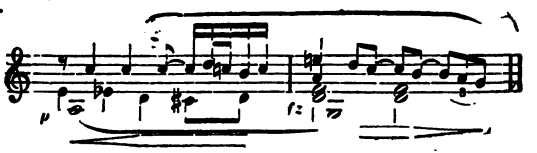
presents himself for admission to the fraternity, measures which soar untrammeled into realms of beauty beyond the imagination of the masters. But it was his love for *Eva* which impelled him to seek admission to the brotherhood, and love inspired his song. He is therefore a reformer only by accident; it is not his love of art, but his passion for *Eva*, which really brings about through his prize song a great musical reform. This is one of Wagner's finest dramatic touches—the love story is the mainspring of the action, the moral is pointed only incidentally. Hence all the motives in which the restless striving after a new ideal or the struggles of a new art form to break through the barriers of conservative prejudice find expression are so many love motives, *Eva* being the incarnation of *Walther's* ideal.

Her pretty face peeps out of every motive which in the *Vorspiel*, and indeed in the rest of the score, wells up in impassioned protest against rule and rote. Thus the motive which breaks in upon the Mastersingers' March and Guild Motive with such emotional energy expresses *Walther's* desire to possess *Eva* as much as his, or, to bring the matter right home, Wagner's yearning for a new ideal in art; and perhaps it can be most appropriately named the MOTIVE OF LONGING:

6.



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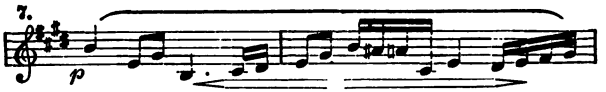
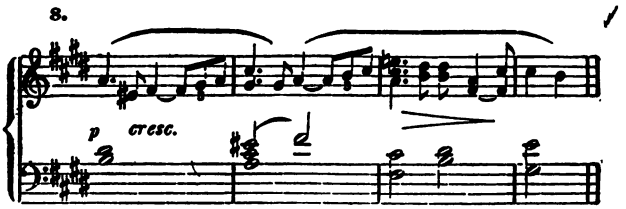
A portion of *Walther's* Prize Song,



like a swiftly whispered declaration of love, leads to a variation of one of the most beautiful themes of the work—the MOTIVE OF SPRING * :



Spring is the season of love Tennyson tells us in those exquisite lines in "Locksley Hall," and it is during this season that *Walther* wooes and wins *Eva*. Nature is tremorous with new life and bounding ecstatically toward the warm embrace of summer. Every leaf, every flower, every blade of grass as it quivers in the breeze adds its note to the sensuous harmony of vernal music; and to this music Wagner has given notation in the Motive of Spring.

And now Wagner has a fling at the old fogyism which was so long an obstacle to his success. He holds the masters up to ridicule in a delightfully humorous passage which parodies the Mastersingers' and Art Brotherhood Motives, while the Spring Motive

* This is the motive in its original form. The variation is found on p. 4, l. 6, b. 4.

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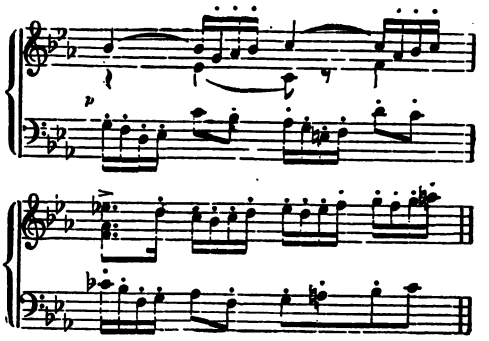
vainly strives to assert itself. In the bass of the following quotation is the MOTIVE OF RIDICULE:

9.



the treble being a variant of the Art Brotherhood Motive. When it is considered that the opposition Wagner encountered from prejudiced critics, not to mention a prejudiced public, was the bane of his career, it seems wonderful that he should have been content to protest against it with this pleasant raillery instead of with bitter invective. But genius is usually prophetic, and Wagner probably was confident of ultimate success. This passage is followed by the Motive of the Mastersingers, which in turn leads to an imposing combination of phrases, showing Wagner's complete command of the technical resources of his art. We hear (p. 7, l. 6, b. 1, &c.) the portion of the Prize Song already quoted—the Motive of the Mastersingers as bass—and in the middle voices portions of

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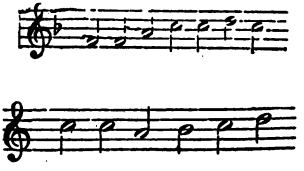
the Mastersingers' March; a little later the Motive of the Art Brotherhood and the Motive of Ridicule are added, this grand massing of orchestral forces ending in a climax of stupendous power on the Ideal Motive, the Motive of the Mastersingers bringing the *Vorspiel* to a fitting close. In this noble passage, in which the Prize Song soars above the various themes typical of the masters, the new ideal seems to be borne to its triumph upon the shoulders of the conservative forces which, won over at last, have espoused its cause with all their sturdy energy.

In a rare book by J. C. Wagenseil, printed in Nuremburgh in 1697, are given four "prize Master Tones." Two of these



Wagner has reproduced in modern garb, the former in the Mastersingers' March, the latter in the Motive of the Art Brotherhood.

ACT I.

The scene is in the Church of St. Catharine, Nuremburgh. The congregation is singing the closing chorale of the service. Among the worshippers are *Eva* and her maid, *Magdalena*. *Walther* stands aside, and by means of nods and gestures communicates

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with *Eva*. This mimic conversation is expressively accompanied by interludes between the verses of the chorale based on the love motives of the *Vorspiel*, Lyric, Spring and Prize Song, and contrasting charmingly with the worshipful strains of the chorale. Indeed the whole scene is most happily conceived, both musically and dramatically.

With the last line of the chorale the Motive of Spring seems, with an impetuous upward rush, to joy with the lovers that the restraint imposed by the religious service is removed, and this idea is carried out still further with the Lyric Motive, which resounds exultingly as the congregation departs, leaving *Eva*, *Magdalena* and *Walther* behind. *Eva*, in order to gain a few words with *Walther*, sends *Magdalena* back to the pew to look for a kerchief and chorale book, which she had purposely left there. The lovers' interchange of confidence is set to the Motive of Spring and to the Lyric Motive. *Magdalena* urges *Eva* to return home, but just then *David* appears in the background and begins putting things to rights for the meeting of the Mastersingers. *Magdalena* is therefore only too glad to linger. The Mastersinger and Guild Motives, which naturally accompany *David's* activity, contrast soberly with the ardent phrases of the lovers. *Magdalena* explains to *Walther* that *Eva* is already affianced, though she herself does not know to whom. Her father wishes her to marry the singer to whom at the coming contest the Mastersingers shall award the prize; and, while she shall be at liberty to decline him, she may marry none but a master.

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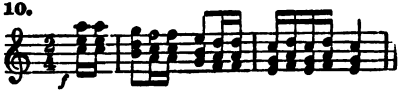
Eva exclaims: "I will choose no one but my knight!" *Magdalena* chides her with a phrase which is derived from the Motive of the Shoemaker Guild, the COBBLER MOTIVE, which seems also from its use here and in other places to be typical of brusque and unmannerly behavior. Very pretty and gay is the theme heard when *David* joins the group—the APPRENTICE MOTIVE:

10.



The scene closes after *Magdalena* has ordered *David*, under penalty of her displeasure, to instruct the knight in the art rules of the Mastersingers, with a beautiful little terzett introduced by the Lyric Motive and formed by a union of the Prize Song and the Ideal Motives.

The apprentices, who have meanwhile entered, call on *David* to aid them in erecting the marker's platform, in which the marker, hidden from view, marks down all mistakes of the singer. These apprentices are a jolly lot and their superabundance of high spirits finds vent in a roguish chorus in which they tease the somewhat self sufficient *David*. They then go about their work, while *David* begins the task of enlightening *Walther* in regard to the rules of the Mastersingers and the conditions under which a candidate for admission to their art brotherhood must sing before his judges. The music of this entire scene is delightfully humorous. The lesson is suspended by

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David, who, observing that the apprentices have not put up the platform correctly, scolds them roundly. *David* then explains to the knight what the marker's duties are, ending by wishing him good luck at the trial singing. The apprentices repeat the graceful melody after him, joining hands and dancing merrily around the platform.

Suddenly they break away, for the masters appear. This scene, in which *Pogner* presents *Walther* as a candidate and *Kothner* calls the roll, is based musically upon a motive which, with a certain sturdy humor, reflects the old-fashioned pomposity of the proceedings :

11.

Toward the close of the roll call this motive is wreathed in a lovely union of the Guild, Prize Song and Lyric Motives, but resounds pompously as the masters take their seats. *Pogner* now addresses the masters, promising *Eva* to the victor in the Mastersong contest. "*Pogner's* Address," as this number is named on concert programs, is one of Wagner's noblest compositions for bass voice. It is rarely given with the breadth of vocal declamation necessary to its full effect, because only on very rare occasions can a performance boast of two bassi capable of personating respectively *Sachs* and *Pogner*, the former rôle naturally engaging the services of the

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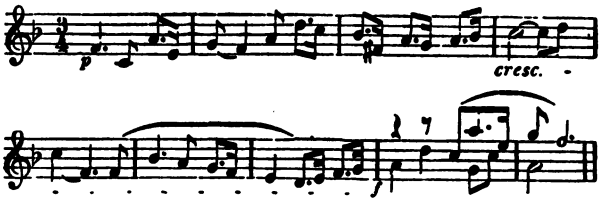
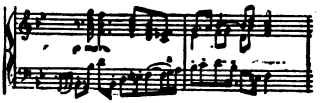
leading basso. It has never been sung here with the requisite power and expression since the famous Wagner concerts under Theodore Thomas, when Scaria's noble voice brought out all the vocal beauty of this composition. He sang especially the words "Eva, my only child," with a depth of feeling which no singer of this rôle in this country has approached. The "Address" is based upon this beautiful theme—the MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL MOTIVE:

12.



After he has added the proviso that *Eva* shall have the privilege of declining the victor's hand—a reservation which draws much unfavorable comment from all the masters but *Sachs*, who upholds *Pogner*—the latter summons *Walther* to present himself before the council. As *Walther* appears the KNIGHT MOTIVE is heard:

13.



Kothner asks him from whom he received instruction in poetry and singing. He replies in a song of exquisite

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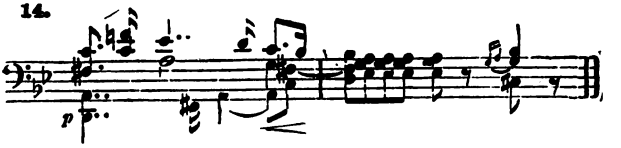
beauty (p. 96) that his master in poetry was the Minnesinger *Walther von der Vogelweid*, and, in singing, nature herself. A phrase of this song, which is repeated several times in the course of the work, forms the VOGELWEID MOTIVE (p. 96, l. 4, b. 2—p. 97, l. 1, b. 2).

A fragment of the Mastersingers' Motive denotes the utter surprise of the masters at *Walther's* song. *Beckmesser* now enters the marker's box. He is jealous of the knight, and eager to have him fail. Therefore we find here in union with the Knight Motive the MARKER MOTIVE:

14.



Kothner now begins reading off the rules of singing established by the masters, his discourse being set to music, which is a capital take-off on old-fashioned forms of composition and never fails to raise a hearty laugh if delivered with considerable pomposity and unction. Unwillingly enough *Walther* takes his seat in the candidate's chair. *Beckmesser* shouts from the marker's box: "Now begin!" After a brilliant chord, followed by a superb ascending run on the violins, *Walther* in ringing tones, enforced by a broad and noble chord, repeats *Beckmesser's* words. But such a change has come over the music that it seems as if that upward rushing run had swept away all restraint

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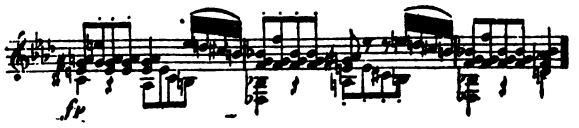
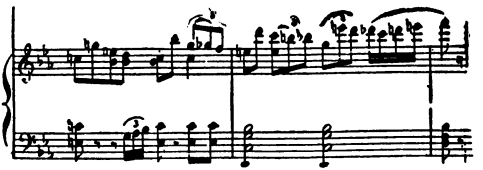
of ancient rule and rote, just as the spring wind whirling through the forest tears up the spread of dry, dead leaves, thus giving air and sun to the yearning mosses and flowers. In *Walther's* song the Spring Motive forms an ever surging, swelling accompaniment, finally joining in the vocal melody and bearing it higher and higher to an impassioned climax. In his song *Walther* is, however, interrupted by the scratching made by *Beckmesser* as he chalks the singer's violations of the rules on the slate, and *Walther*, who is singing of love and spring, changes his theme to winter, which, lingering behind a thorny hedge, is plotting how it can mar the joy of the vernal season. The knight then rises from the chair and

15—A.



B.



sings a second stanza with defiant enthusiasm. As he concludes it *Beckmesser* tears open the curtains which concealed him in the marker's box, and exhib-

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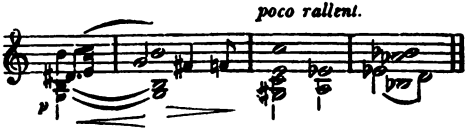
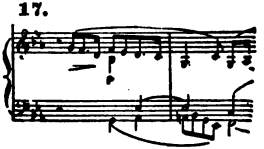
its his board completely covered with chalk marks. *Walther* protests, but the masters, with the exception of *Sachs* and *Pogner*, refuse to listen further, and deride his singing. We have here the MOTIVE OF DERISION, sometimes used in its simplest form, 15 A, but more frequently with a characteristic addition, as at B.

Keenly satirical is the use (p. 122, l. 3, b. 4, &c.) of the Spring Motive, when the masters exclaim : "Who calls that singing?" With *Sachs'* protest that not everyone is of their opinion—that while he found the knight's art method new, he did not find it formless—the SACHS MOTIVE (17) is introduced, being, however, preceded by the MOTIVE OF ENVY (16), characteristic of the bitter feeling against which he protests :

16.



17.



The Sachs Motive betokens the genial nature of this sturdy yet gentle man. He is the master spirit of the drama. He combines the force of a conservative character with the tolerance of a progressive one, and is thus the incarnation of the idea which Wagner

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is working out in this drama, in which the union of a proper degree of conservative caution with progressive energy produces a new ideal in art. With *Sachs'* innuendo that *Beckmesser's* marking could hardly be considered just, as he is a candidate for *Eva's* hand, we have the Sachs Motive beautifully utilized as an accompaniment to the Midsummer Festival Motive. *Beckmesser*, in reply, chides *Sachs* for having delayed so long in finishing a pair of shoes for him, and as *Sachs* makes a humorously apologetic reply the Cobbler Motive is heard (p. 130, l. 4, b. 2).

The sturdy burgher calls to *Walther* to finish his song in spite of the masters. And now a finale of masterful construction begins. In short, excited phrases the masters chaff and deride *Walther*. His song, however, soars above all the hubbub. The apprentices see their opportunity in the confusion, and joining hands they dance around the marker's box, singing as they do so. We now have combined with astounding skill *Walther's* song, the apprentices' chorus and the exclamations of the masters. The latter finally shout their verdict: "Rejected and outsung!" and the knight, with a proud gesture of contempt, leaves the church. The orchestra carries the melody of the apprentices' chorus further, while the young fellows put the seats and benches back in their proper places, and in doing so greatly obstruct the masters as they crowd toward the doors. The apprentices' melody is interrupted by the exquisite harmonies of the Spring Motive as *Sachs*, who has lingered behind, gazes thoughtfully at the empty sing-

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er's chair, and then, with a humorous gesture of discouragement, turns away. The Mastersingers' Motive, ending with the chords to which the masters shouted their verdict at *Walther*, brings the act to a close.

Act II.

The scene of this act represents a street in Nuremburgh crossing the stage and intersected in the middle by a narrow, winding alley. There are thus two corner houses—on the right corner of the alley *Pogner's*, on the left *Sachs'*. Before the former is a linden tree, before the latter an elder. It is a lovely summer evening.

The opening scene is a merry one. *David* and the apprentices are closing shop. After a brisk introduction based on the Midsummer Festival Motive the apprentices quiz *David* on his love affair with *Magdalena*. The latter appears with a basket of dainties for her lover, but on learning that the knight has been rejected she snatches the basket from *David* and hurries back into the house. The apprentices now mockingly congratulate *David* on his successful wooing. *David* loses his temper and shows fight, but *Sachs*, coming upon the scene, sends the apprentices on their way and then enters his workshop with *David*. The music of this episode, especially the apprentices' chorus, is delightfully bright and graceful.

Pogner and *Eva*, returning from an evening stroll, now come down the alley. Before retiring into the house the father questions the daughter as to her

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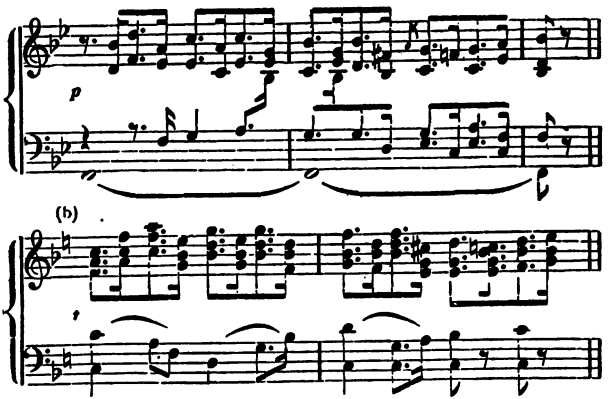
feelings concerning the duty she is to perform at the Mastersinging on the morrow. Her replies are discreetly evasive. The music beautifully reflects the affectionate relations between *Pogner* and *Eva*; in fact the entire scene is both dramatically and musically a masterpiece of tender grace. Most exquisite is the passage beginning four bars before *Pogner's* words, "And thou my child?" on page 165, the rippling runs on the clarinet which accompany *Eva's* replies seeming to reproduce, as Heintz suggests, the slight chilliness of the evening air. When *Pogner*, his daughter seated beside him under the linden tree, speaks of the morrow's festival and *Eva's* part in it in awarding the prize to the master of her choice before the assembled burghers of Nuremburgh, the stately NUREMBURGH MOTIVE is ushered in:

18.



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Magdalena appears at the door and signals to *Eva*. The latter persuades her father that it is too cool to remain outdoors and, as they enter the house, *Eva* learns from *Magdalena* of *Walther's* failure before the masters. *Magdalena* advises her to seek counsel with *Sachs* after supper.

The Cobbler Motive shows us *Sachs* and *David* in the former's workshop. When the master has dismissed his 'prentice till morning he yields to his poetic love of the balmy midsummer night and, laying down his work, leans over the half door of his shop as if lost in reverie. The Cobbler Motive dies away to *pp*, and then there is wafted from over the orchestra like the sweet scent of the blooming elder the Spring Motive, while tender notes on the horn blossom beneath a nebulous veil of *tremolo* violins into memories of *Walther's* wooing song. Its measures run through *Sachs'* head until, angered at the stupid conservatism of his associates, he resumes his work to the brusque measures of the Cobbler's Motive. As his ill humor yields again to the beauties of the night, this motive yields once more to that of spring, which, with reminiscences of *Walther's* first song before the masters (a measure of the Prize Song being also heard at p. 175, l. 3, b. 3), imbues this masterful monologue with poetic beauty of the highest order. The last words in praise of *Walther* ("The bird who sang today," &c.,) are sung to a broad and expressive melody.

Eva now comes out into the street and, shyly approaching the shop, stands at the door unnoticed by *Sachs* until she speaks to him. The theme which

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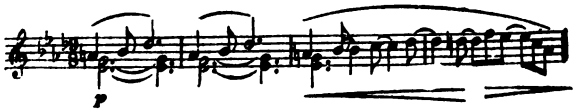
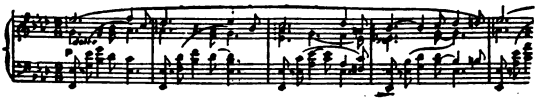
pervades this scene seems to breathe forth the very spirit of lovely maidenhood which springs from the union of romantic aspirations, feminine reserve and rare physical graces. It is the EVA MOTIVE, which, with the delicate touch of a master, Wagner so varies that it follows the many subtle dramatic suggestions of the scene. The EVA MOTIVE in its original form is as follows:

19.



There is a suggestion of it in a phrase in *Walther's* first song (p. 97, l. 1, b. 2, &c.), a suggestion which gains further significance from the fact that this phrase from *Walther's* song introduces the present scene as *Eva* steps over to *Sachs'* shop. This is followed, when at *Eva's* first words *Sachs* looks up, by an elegant variation of her Motive:

20.



Then, the scene being now fully ushered in, we have the Eva Motive itself. *Eva* leads the talk up to the morrow's festival, and when *Sachs* mentions ***Beckmesser*** as her chief wooer, roguishly hints, with evident reference to *Sachs* himself, that she might pre-

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fer a hearty widower to a bachelor of such disagreeable characteristics as the marker. There are sufficient indications that the sturdy master is not indifferent to *Eva's* charms, but, whole souled, genuine friend that he is, his one idea is to further the love affair between his fair young neighbor and *Walther*. The music of this passage is very suggestive. The melodic leading of the upper voice in the accompaniment, when *Eva* asks "Could not a widower hope to win me?" (p. 180, l. 3, b. 1–3), is identical with a variation of the Isolde Motive in "Tristan and Isolde," while the Eva Motive, shyly *pp*, seems to indicate the artfulness of *Eva's* question. The reminiscence from "Tristan" can hardly be regarded as accidental, for *Sachs* afterward boasts that he does not care to share the fate of poor *King Marke*. *Eva* now endeavors to glean particulars of *Walther's* experience in the morning, and we have the Motive of Envy (16) (derived from the Eva Motive, as if to show the contrast between her goodness and the malice of those who judged *Walther*), the Knight Motive and the Motive of Ridicule. *Eva* does not appreciate the fine satire in *Sachs'* severe strictures on *Walther's* singing—he re-echoes not his own views, but those of the other masters, for whom, not for the knight, his strictures are really intended—and she leaves him in anger. This shows *Sachs* which way the wind blows, and he forthwith resolves to do all in his power to bring *Eva's* and *Walther's* love affair to a successful conclusion. While *Eva* is engaged with *Magdalena*, who has come out to call her, he busies

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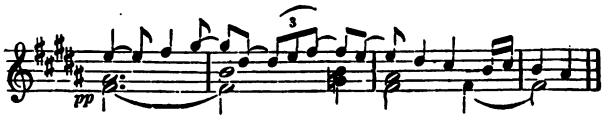
himself in closing the upper half of his shop door so far that only a gleam of light is visible, he himself being completely hidden. *Eva* learns from *Magdalena* of *Beckmesser's* intended serenade and it is agreed that the maid shall personate *Eva* at the window.

Steps are heard coming down the alley. *Eva* recognizes *Walther* and flies to his arms, *Magdalena* discreetly hurrying into the house. The ensuing ardent scene between *Eva* and *Walther* brings familiar motives. The knight's excitement is comically broken in upon by the *Night Watchman's* cow horn, and, as *Eva* lays her hand soothingly upon his arm and counsels that they retreat within the shadow of the linden tree, there steals over the orchestra, like the fragrance of the summer night, a delicate variant of the Eva Motive—THE SUMMER NIGHT MOTIVE :

21.



to which, when *Eva* vanishes into the house to prepare to elope with *Walther*, there is united a phrase from the Prize Song (p. 204, l. 1, b. 4—p. 205. l. 3, b. 5). The *Night Watchman* now goes up the stage intoning a chant still in vogue in the cities of Germany in the early part of this century. Coming in the midst of the beautiful modern music of "The Mastersingers," its effect is highly comical, yet not without its quaint pathos. The last variant of the

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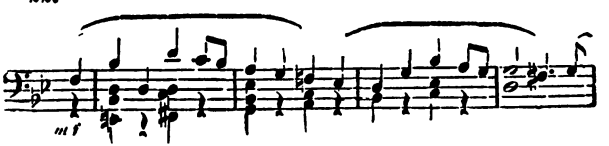
Eva Motive is now resumed, and as *Eva* reappears the music dashes joyfully into the Prize Song Motive. As she and the knight are about to make their escape, *Sachs*, to prevent this precipitate and foolish step, throws open his shutters and allows his lamp to shed a streak of brilliant light across the street.

The lovers hesitate; and now *Beckmesser* sneaks in after the *Night Watchman* and, leaning against *Sachs'* house, begins to tune his lute, the peculiar twang of which, contrasted with the rich orchestration, sounds irresistibly ridiculous.

Meanwhile *Eva* and *Walther* have once more retreated into the shade of the linden tree, and *Sachs*, who has placed his work bench in front of his door, begins hammering at the last and intones a song of which Heintz remarks that it is one of the most precious pearls of musical invention. Perhaps it might be more in keeping with the character of the melody to call it one of the rough diamonds of musical invention, for it is purposely brusque and rough, just such a song as a hearty, happy artisan might sing over his work:

22.



It is aptly introduced by the Cobbler Motive. *Beckmesser*, greatly disturbed lest his serenade should

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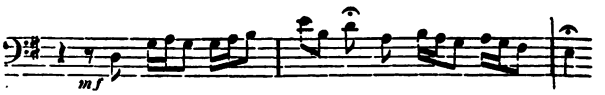
be ruined, entreats *Sachs* to cease singing. The latter agrees, with the proviso, however, that he shall "mark" each of *Beckmesser's* mistakes with a hammer stroke. As if to bring out as sharply as possible the ridiculous character of the serenade the orchestra breathes forth once more the summer night's music (21) before *Beckmesser* begins his song, which is set to a parody of the Lyric Motive,

23.



as if Wagner, with keen satire, wished to show how a beautiful melody may become absurd through old fogy methods. *Beckmesser* has hardly begun before *Sachs'* hammer comes down on the last with a resounding whack, which makes the town clerk fairly jump with anger. He resumes his serenade, which, however, is soon once more rudely interrupted by a blow of *Sachs'* hammer. The whacks come faster and faster. *Beckmesser*, in order to make himself heard above them, sings louder and louder. Some of the neighbors are awakened by the noise and coming to their windows bid *Beckmesser* hold his peace. *David*, stung by jealousy as he sees *Magdalena* listening to the serenade, leaps from his room and falls upon the town clerk with a cudgel. The neighbors, male and female, run out into the street and a general melée ensues, the masters, who hurry upon the scene, seeking to restore quiet, while the apprentices vent

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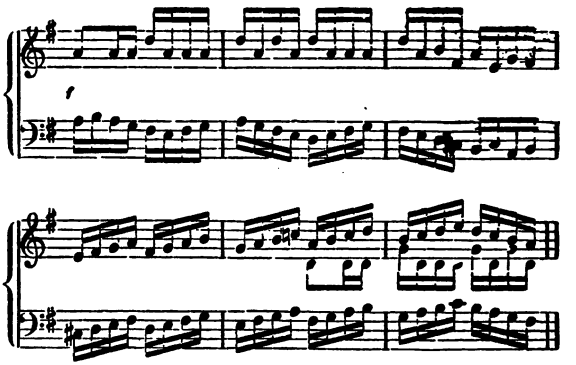
their high spirits by doing all in their power to add to the hubbub. All is now noise and disorder, pandemonium seeming to have been let loose upon the dignified old town.

Musically this tumult finds expression in a fugue whose chief theme is the CUDGEL MOTIVE:

24.



With rare humor the various parts of the fugue are divided among the apprentices and journeymen, who are heart and soul in the fight, the terrified women and the masters. The motive of poor *Beckmesser's* song, which was the cause of the disturbance, figures as *cantus firmus* in the fugue, an inspiration as happy from a dramatic as from a musical point of view. The uproar having reached its height, *Sachs*, who seems to consider that *Beckmesser* has had punishment enough, interferes, drives off *David*, who is still belaboring the town clerk, shoves the journey-

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men and 'prentices out of the way, and, having gradually cleared the street, pushes *Eva*, with whom *Walther* was seeking to escape unnoticed through the crowd, into her father's arms, and drags *Walther* into the shop with him.

Uproariously farcical as this scene has been it is now followed by a touch of nature which, in its quiet way, is even more humorous. For when the street is again clear and the turmoil has subsided, the *Night Watchman* appears on the scene rubbing his eyes, and in a sleepy voice intones his ludicrous chant. The moon has risen and floods the scene with its soft white light. As the watchman makes his way up the alley he lunges at his shadow with his clumsy halberd. The Midsummer Night music, *con sordini* on the violins, the Cudgel Motive, with exceeding delicacy on the flute, and the serenade on the clarinet and afterward roguishly on the bassoon, give elfish grace and merriment to the music, the act ending with a heavy chord.

Act III.

During this act the tender strain in *Sachs'* sturdy character is brought out in bold relief. Hence the prelude develops what may be called three *Sachs* themes, two of them expressive of his twofold nature as poet and cobbler—

(Hans Sachs was a shoe-
Maker and poet, too !)—

the third standing for the love which his fellow burghers bore him.

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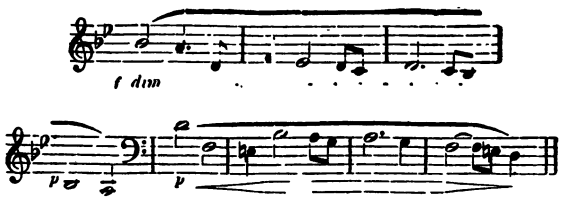
The prelude opens with the MOTIVE OF POETIC ILLUSION,

25.



which reflects the deep thought and poetic aspirations of *Sachs* the poet. This is followed by the beautiful chorus, sung later in the act, in praise of *Sachs:* "Awake ! draws nigh the break of day." The second part is introduced later in the prelude. This is that theme among the three heard in the prelude which points to *Sachs'* popularity. The third consists of portions of the cobbler's song in the second act. This prelude has long been considered one of Wagner's masterpieces. The themes are treated with the utmost delicacy, so that we recognize through them both the tender, poetic side of *Sachs'* nature and his good humored brusqueness. THE MOTIVE OF POETIC ILLUSION is deeply reflective, and it might be preferable to name it the Motive of Poetic Thought, were it not that it is better to preserve the significance of the term *Wahn Motif*, which there is ample reason to believe originated with Wagner himself. The prelude is a subtle dramatic study and, is, from a certain point of view, perhaps the most dramatic bit of music in Wagner's works. For

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here is music which is more than a graphic accompaniment to action or a reflection of thought. The prelude is, in fact, a subtle analysis of character expressed in music.

The curtain rises upon a peaceful scene. *Sachs* is sitting in an armchair in his sunny workshop, reading in a large folio. The Illusion Motive has not yet died away in the prelude, so that it seems to reflect the thoughts awakened in *Sachs* by what he is reading. *David*, dressed for the festival, enters just as the prelude ends. There is a scene full of charming *bonhomie* between *Sachs* and his 'prentice, which is followed, when the latter has withdrawn, by *Sachs*' monologue: "Wahn! Wahn! Ueberall Wahn!" (Illusion! everywhere illusion!).

While the Illusion Motive seems to weave a poetic atmosphere about him, *Sachs*, buried in thought, rests his head upon his arm over the folio. The Illusion Motive is followed by the Spring Motive, which in turn yields to the Nuremburgh Motive as *Sachs* sings the praises of the stately old town. At his reference to the tumult of the night before there are in the score corresponding allusions to the music of that episode. Then the Summer Night Motive, a phrase of *Beckmesser's* serenade and the Cudgel Motive, the first in all its dreamy beauty, the last two in a setting of exquisite delicacy, cast an elfish spell over *Sachs*' meditation. "Some glow worm could not find its mate," he sings, referring to *Walther* and *Eva*. The Midsummer Festival, Lyric and Nuremburgh motives in union foreshadow the triumph of true art through

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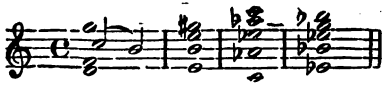
love on Nuremburgh soil, and thus bring the monologue to a stately conclusion.

Walther now enters from the chamber, which opens upon a gallery, and, descending into the workshop, is heartily greeted by *Sachs* with the Sachs Motive, which dominates the immediately ensuing scene. Very beautiful is the theme (p. 310) in which *Sachs* protests against *Walther's* derision of the masters; for they are, in spite of their many old fogyish notions, the conservators of much that is true and beautiful in art. Noteworthy before this (p. 301, l. 1, b. 3–5) is the DREAM MOTIVE,

26.



a dreamy succession of chords, when *Walther* tells *Sachs* of the song which came to him in a dream during the night.

Walther sings two stanzas of this Prize Song, *Sachs* making friendly critical comments as he writes down the words of the song. The Nuremburgh Motive in sonorous and festive instrumentation closes this exquisitely melodious episode.

When *Sachs* and *Walther* have retired *Beckmesser* is seen peeping into the shop. Observing that it is empty he enters hastily. He is ridiculously overdressed for the approaching festival, limps and occasionally rubs his muscles as if he were still stiff and sore from his drubbing. He is excited to strange actions, denoting terror, as if he were recalling his sad

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plight of the night before, until his glance falls on the manuscript of the Prize Song in *Sachs'* handwriting on the table, when he breaks forth in wrathful exclamations, thinking now that he has in the popular master a rival for *Eva's* hand. Hearing the chamber door opening he hastily grabs the manuscript and thrusts it into his pocket. *Sachs* enters. Observing that the manuscript is no longer on the table he conceives the idea of allowing *Beckmesser* to keep it, knowing that he will fail most wretchedly in attempting to give musical expression to *Walther's* inspiration.

This scene places *Sachs* in a new light. A fascinating trait of his character is the dash of scapegrace with which it is seasoned. Hence, when he thinks of allowing *Beckmesser* to use the poem the Sachs Motive takes on a somewhat facetious, roguish grace (p. 340, l. 1, b. 4, &c.). Other motives which are prominent in this scene are already familiarly associated with *Beckmesser's* character.

There now ensues a charming dialogue between *Sachs* and *Eva*, who enters when *Beckmesser* has departed. This is accompanied by a transformation of the Eva Motive, which reflects her shyness and hesitancy in taking *Sachs* into her confidence, and hence may be called the MOTIVE OF MAIDENLY RESERVE:

27.

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With it is joined the Cobbler Motive when *Eva* places her foot upon the stool while *Sachs* tries on the shoes she is to wear at the festival. When, with a cry of joy, she recognizes her lover as he appears upon the gallery, and remains motionless, gazing upon him as if spellbound, the lovely Summer Night Motive enhances the beauty of the tableau. While *Sachs* cobbles and chats away, pretending not to observe the lovers, the Motive of Maidenly Reserve passes through many modulations until there is heard a phrase from "Tristan and Isolde" (the Isolde Motive), an allusion which is explained below. The Lyric Motive introduces the third stanza of *Walther's* Prize Song, with which he now greets *Eva*. Overcome with joy, she sinks upon *Sachs'* breast, the Illusion Motive rhapsodizing the praises of the generous cobbler-poet, who seeks relief from his emotions in bantering remarks, until *Eva* glorifies him in a noble burst of love and gratitude in a melody derived from the Isolde Motive:

28.

It is after this that *Sachs*, alluding to his own love of *Eva*, exclaims that he will have none of *King Marke's* triste experience; and the use of the King Marke Motive at this point shows that the previous echoes of the Isolde Motive were premeditated rather than accidental.

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Magdalena and *David* now enter and *Sachs* gives to *Walther's* Prize Song its musical baptism, utilizing chiefly the first and second lines of the choral which opens the first act. *David* then kneels down and, according to the custom of the day, receives from *Sachs* a box on the ear in token that he is advanced from 'prentice to journeyman. Then follows the beautiful quintette, in which the Prize Song, as a thematic germ, puts forth its loveliest blossoms. This is but one of many instances in which Wagner proved that when the dramatic situation called for it he could conceive and develop a melody of the most exquisite fibre.

After the quintette the orchestra resumes the Nuremburgh Motive and all depart for the festival. The stage is now shut off by a curtain behind which the scene is changed from *Sachs'* workshop to the meadow on the banks of the Pegnitz, near Nuremburgh. After a tumultuous orchestral interlude, which admirably portrays by means of already familiar motives, with the addition of the fanfare of the town musicians, the noise and bustle incidental to preparations for a great festival, the curtain rises upon a lively scene. Boats decked out in flags and bunting and full of festively clad members of the various guilds and their wives and children are constantly arriving. To the right is a platform decorated with the flags of the guilds which have already gathered. People are making merry under tents and awnings where refreshments are served. The 'prentices are having a jolly time of it heralding and marshalling

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the guilds who disperse and mingle with the merry-makers after the standard bearers have planted their banners near the platform.

Soon after the curtain rises the cobblers arrive, and as they march down the meadow, conducted by the 'prentices, they sing in honor of St. Crispin, their patron saint, a chorus, based on the Cobbler Motive, to which a melody in popular style is added. The town watchmen, with trumpets and drums, the town pipers, lute makers, &c., and then the journeymen, with comical sounding toy instruments, march past, and are succeeded by the tailors, who sing a humorous chorus, telling how Nuremburgh was saved from its ancient enemies by a tailor, who sewed a goatskin around him and pranced around on the town walls, to the terror of the hostile army, which took him for the devil. The bleating of a goat is capitally imitated in this chorus, one division (p. 391, l. 1, b. 2 and 3) parodying Rossini's "Di' tanti palpiti."

With the last chord of the tailors' chorus the bakers strike up their song and are greeted in turn by cobblers and tailors with their respective refrains. A boatful of young peasant girls in gay costumes now arrives, and the 'prentices make a rush for the bank. A charming dance in waltz time is now struck up. The 'prentices with the girls dance down toward the journeymen, but as soon as these try to get hold of the girls, the 'prentices veer off with them in another direction. This veering should be timed to fall at the beginning of those periods of the dance to which Wagner has given, instead of eight measures,

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seven and nine, in order by this irregularity to emphasize the amusing ruse of the 'prentices.

The dance is interrupted by the arrival of the masters, the 'prentices falling in to receive, the others making room for the procession. The Mastersingers advance to the stately strains of the Mastersinger Motive, which, when *Kothner* appears bearing their standard with the figure of King David playing on his harp, goes over into the sturdy measures of the Mastersingers' March. *Sachs* rises and advances. At sight of him the populace intone the noblest of all choruses, "Awake! draws nigh the break of day," the words of which are a poem by the historic Hans Sachs, from the song of the Reformation, "The Nightingale of Wittenberg."

At its conclusion the populace break out into shouts in praise of *Sachs*, who modestly yet most feelingly gives them thanks. The Illusion, Sachs, Art Brotherhood, Lyric and Midsummer Festival Motives are here employed with beautiful effect. When *Beckmesser* is led to the little mound of turf upon which the singer is obliged to stand we have the humorous variation of the Mastersinger Motive from the Prelude (p. 5, l. 5, b. 3, &c.). *Beckmesser's* attempt to sing *Walther's* poem ends, as *Sachs* had anticipated, in utter failure. The town clerk's effort is received with jeers. Before he rushes away, infuriated but utterly discomfited, he proclaims that *Sachs* is the author of the song they have derided. The cobbler poet declares to the people that it is not by him; that it is a beautiful poem if sung to the proper melody and that he will show them

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the author of the poem, who will in song disclose its beauties. He then introduces *Walther*. The knight easily succeeds in winning over people and masters, who repeat the closing melody of his Prize Song in token of their joyous appreciation of his new and wondrous art. *Pogner* advances to decorate *Walther* with the insignia of the Mastersingers' Guild, but the knight turns unwillingly away.

In measures easily recognized from the Prelude, to which the Nuremburgh Motive is added, *Sachs* now praises the masters and explains their noble purpose as conservators of art. *Eva* takes the wreath with which *Walther* has been crowned, and with it crowns *Sachs*, who has meanwhile decorated the knight with the insignia. *Pogner* kneels, as if in homage, before *Sachs*, the masters point to the cobbler poet as to their chief, and *Walther* and *Eva* remain on either side of him, leaning gratefully upon his shoulders. The chorus repeats *Sachs'* final admonition to the closing measures of the Prelude.

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PARSIFAL.

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"PARSIFAL."

"Parsifal" is a familiar name to those who have heard "Lohengrin." *Lohengrin*, it will be remembered, tells *Elsa* that he is *Parsifal's* son and one of the knights of the Holy Grail. The name is written Percival in "Lohengrin," as well as in Tennyson's "Idyls of the King." Now, however, Wagner returns to the quainter and more "Teutonic" form of spelling. As "Parsifal" deals with an earlier period in the history of the Grail knighthood than "Lohengrin," the later music drama is in a measure a prelude to the earlier, and there is a resemblance between the Grail music in "Parsifal" and the "Lohengrin" music —a resemblance not in melody, nor even in outline, but merely in the purity and spirituality that breathes through both. Then, too, both *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* are for a wonder at once both virtuous and interesting. Wagner is rarely virtuous without becoming monotonous. In "Tannhäuser," for instance, the lays and relays of the minstrels at the prize singing to virtuous love are rather dull, and the action lags until *Tannhäuser* suddenly intones his rhapsody over the unholy charms of Venus. And indeed it is not *Parsifal's* virtue so much as the temptations to which it is

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subjected that make him an interesting hero, the temptations, as usual, having inspired Wagner more than the virtue.

Wagner found the principal characters in this music drama in three legends: "Percival le Galois; or, Contes de Grail," by Chretiens de Troyes (1190); "Parsifal," by Wolfram von Eschenbach, and a manuscript of the fourteenth century called by scholars the "Mabinogion." He has not held himself strictly to any one of these, but has combined them all.

The plot of "Parsifal" is briefly as follows: *Amfortas*, King of the Knights of the Holy Grail, who dwell in the castle of Montsalvat among the mountains of Gothic Spain, is enticed by *Kundry*, a lovely woman under the sway of *Klingsor*, an evil magician on the southern slope of the same mountains, supposed to be facing Arabian Spain, into *Klingsor's* magic garden. While in her arms *Amfortas* drops the holy spear, which is at once seized by *Klingsor*, who wounds the King therewith and carries it off. *Amfortas* cannot recover from the wound until it has been touched by the spear, which can be wrested from *Klingsor* only by the "guileless fool" (*der reine Thor*), one who has been all his life ignorant of sin, who through deep sympathy with the anguish of *Amfortas* becomes conscious of the King's sin and can resist temptation though it come to him ever so enticingly. Such an one is *Parsifal*. By resisting *Kundry's* charms he regains the spear, destroys *Klingsor* and thus frees *Kundry* from his evil sway, heals the wound of *Amfortas* and is proclaimed King of the Knighthood.

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The plot is allegorical. *Parsifal* is the personification of Christianity, *Klingsor* of Paganism, and the triumph of *Parsifal* over *Klingsor* is the triumph of Christianity over Paganism.

The Holy Grail, according to a twelfth century manuscript, Robert de Boron's "Petit Saint Grail," is the vessel into which the Saviour poured the wine at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood which flowed from the spear wound in our Saviour's side. Chretiens de Troyes follows De Boron, but in Wolfram's version the Grail becomes a stone placed in the keeping of the Grail Knights at Montsalvat by messengers from Heaven. Wagner follows De Boron and Chretiens de Troyes, but adopts the uncovering of the holy vessel every Good Friday to strengthen and inspire the knights in the performance of their duties.

Wagner also follows the French legends in assuming the holy spear to be no other than the weapon thrust by Longinus into the side of the Saviour. *Amfortas* (meaning powerless), the wounded King, figures in all the legends; he suffering in all for the same crime against the laws of the knighthood, and to be saved only by the champion Peredur, Perceval, Parzival or Parsifal, as he is known in the various legends. Wagner adopts Görres' derivation of the name from the Arabian Parseh-Fal, "the guileless fool." In the Mabinogi manuscript and in the legend of Chretiens *Parsifal's* simple question as to what the spear and the Grail are, and in Wolfram's legend a simple question concerning the King's wound, will

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restore *Amfortas*. Reared in the wild woods by his mother, *Parsifal* is lured from this retreat by a troop of knights in brilliant armor and mounted on richly caparisoned horses. He comes to the Castle of the Grail, but does not ask and goes forth again into the world. Afterward he is cursed for this omission, according to the Mabinogi manuscript, by a wild, black haired maiden, called by Chretiens *La Demoiselle* and by Wolfram *Kondrie la Sorcière*, who bids *Parsifal* seek again for the Castle of the Grail. He finds it after many adventures and asks the question. Wagner requires that he must regain the spear and touch the wound of *Amfortas*, which is, of course, more dramatic than the simple act of questioning.

Kundry is a sort of female Ahasuerus—a wandering Jewess. In the Mabinogi manuscript she is no other than Herodias, condemned to wander forever because she laughed at the head of John the Baptist. Here Wagner makes another change. According to him she is condemned for laughing in the face of the Saviour as he was bearing the cross. She seeks forgiveness by serving the Grail Knights as messenger on her swift horse, but ever and anon she is driven by the curse hanging over her back to *Klingsor*, who changes her to a beautiful woman and places her in his garden to lure the Knights of the Grail. She can be freed only by one who resists her temptations. Finally she is freed by *Parsifal* and is baptized. In her character of Grail messenger she has much in common with the wild messengers of Walhalla, the Walkyries. Indeed, in the Edda her name appears

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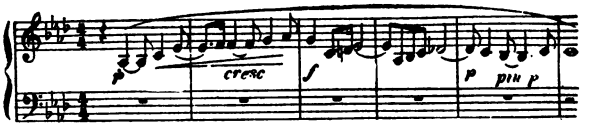
in the first part of the compound Gundryggja, which denotes the office of the Walkyries.

THE VORSPIEL.

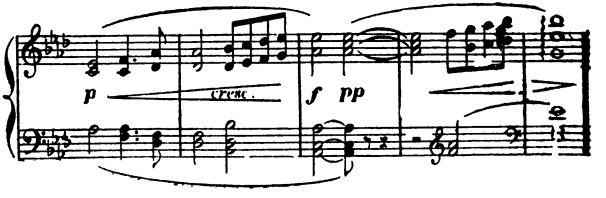
The *Vorspiel* is based on three of the most deeply religious motives in the entire work. It opens with the MOTIVE OF THE SACRAMENT,

1. A.



over which, when it is repeated, arpeggios hover, as in the religious paintings of old masters angel forms float above the figure of virgin or saint. Through this motive we gain insight into the office of the Knights of the Grail, who from time to time strengthen themselves for their spiritual duties by partaking of the communion, on which occasions the Grail itself is uncovered. This motive at once inspires the hearer with reverence. The passage having been repeated in another key and with a slight variation, giving it a more tragic character, leads to the GRAIL MOTIVE,

2.



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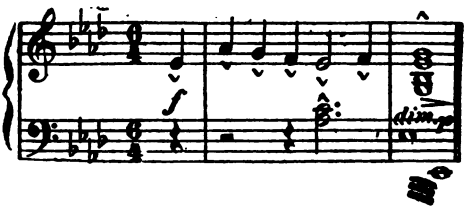
effectively swelling to *forte* and then dying away in ethereal harmonies, like the soft light with which the Grail illumines the hall in which the knights gather for worship.

The trumpets then announce the MOTIVE OF FAITH,

3.



a phrase of elemental strength, with its severe but powerful outlines, and portraying superbly the immutability of a perfect faith. After the Grail Motive has been heard again the Motive of Faith is repeated, but so varied that its severity is softened from a stalwart confession of faith to that sense of exquisite peace which "passeth all understanding."

4.

The rest of the *Vorspiel* has the Motive of the Sacrament as a basis, its character being, however, so

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changed as to express sorrowful agitation, thus portraying *Amfortas* suffering for his sin. That portion of the Motive of the Sacrament which appears later as the Spear Motive (1 A) assumes through a slight change a deeply sad character, and becomes typical throughout the work of the sorrow wrought by *Amfortas'* crime, and becomes the ELEGIAC MOTIVE.

Thus we have depicted in the *Vorspiel* the religious duties which play so prominent a part in the drama, and also the unhappiness which *Amfortas'* sinful forgetfulness of these duties has brought upon himself and his knights.

ACT I.

The curtain rises on a tranquil scene. It is dawn. *Gurnemanz*, an old but vigorous knight, and two pages are sleeping beneath the shade of a huge oak. To the back the ground slopes to a low lying forest lake. The way to the Castle of the Grail leads from the left. A solemn reveille is heard in the distance. It is formed by the first two bars of the Motive of the Sacrament. *Gurnemanz* awakens and calls to the esquires :

Hey! Ho! Wood keepers twain!
Sleep keepers I deem ye!
At least be moving with morning!

As they kneel in silent prayer the Motive of Faith echoes their devotional thoughts. The use of these motives at the very beginning of the act at once

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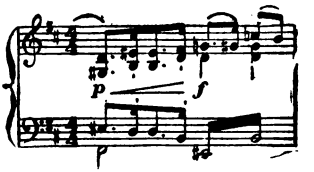
touches the religious sympathies of the hearer, and causes him to feel that he is gazing upon a scene in some region whose ground is holy.

Two Knights of the Grail soon appear to prepare the King's bath in the forest lake, where he seeks to cool his burning wound. Afterward *Kundry* rushes in hastily, almost reeling, her garb fastened up high and girdled by a snake skin. Her black hair hangs in loose, flowing locks as she presses a flask of balsam for the King into the hand of *Gurnemanz*.

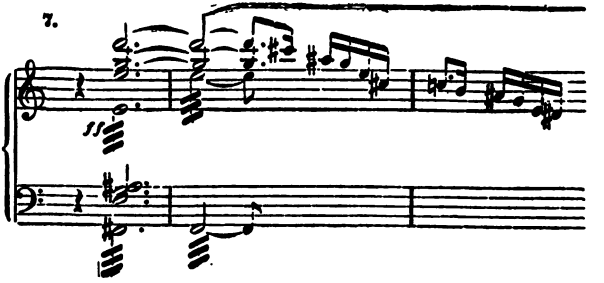
Kundry's rapid approach on her wild horse is accompanied by a furious gallop in the orchestra :

6.



Then, as she rushes upon the stage, the KUNDRY MOTIVE—a headlong descent of the string instruments through four octaves—is heard :

7.



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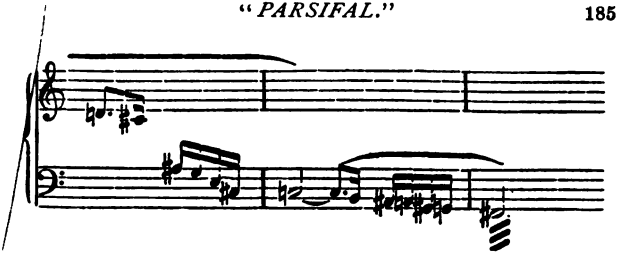
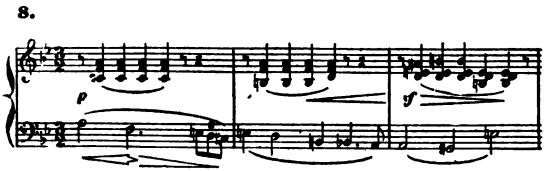


Kundry's action in seeking balsam for the King's wound gives us insight into the two contradictory natures represented by her character. For here is the woman who brought all his suffering upon *Amfortas* striving to ease it when she is free from the evil sway of *Klingsor*. She is at times the faithful messenger of the Grail; at times the evil genius of its defenders.

When *Amfortas* is borne in upon a litter there is heard the MOTIVE OF AMFORTAS' SUFFERING,



expressive of his physical and mental agony. It has a peculiar heavy, dragging rhythm, as if he were slowly dying of his wound. A most beautiful idyl is played by the orchestra when the knights bear *Amfortas* to the forest lake. One seems to hear the singing

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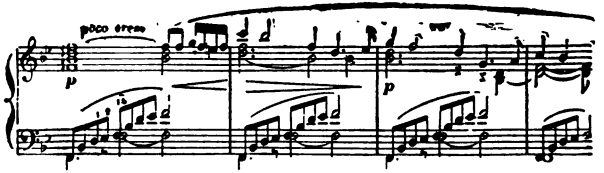
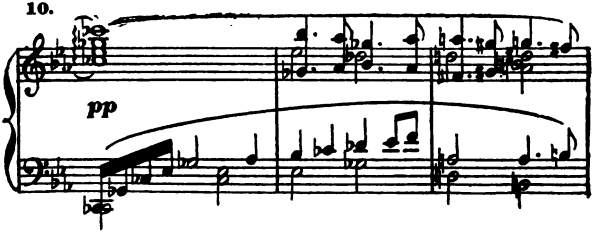
of birds, the rustling of leaves and the music of running waters:

9.



Gurnemanz then relates to the esquires who have remained behind with him the story of the Grail. When he tells how the sacred vessel and the spear were delivered to *Titurel*, to be guarded by him, the Motive of Faith assumes this exquisite form:

10.



The story of *Amfortas'* fall from grace and *Klingsor's* capture of the holy spear is told in these words:

The waste he [Klingsor] hath transformed to wondrous gardens
Where women bide, of charms infernal;
Thither he seeks to draw the Grail's true wardens
To wicked joys and pain eternal.
Those who are lured find him their master;
To many happens such disaster.
When Titurel decayed in manhood's power
And with the regal might his son did dower
Amfortas gave himself no rest,
But sought to quell this magic pest.

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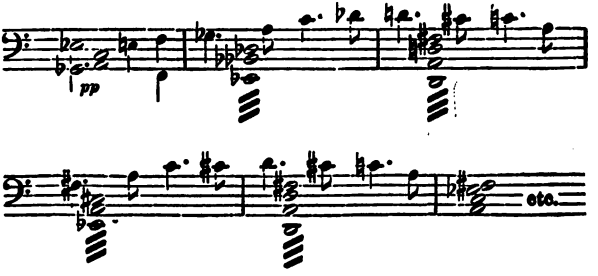
While near the walls from us the king was ta'en :
A maid of fearful beauty turned his brain.
He lay bewitched, her form enfolding,
The spear no longer holding :
A deathly cry—I rushed anigh ;
But laughing Klingsor fled before—
The sacred spear away he bore.
I fought to aid the flying king's returning ;
A fatal wound, though, in his side was burning.
That wound it is which none may make to close.

The references to the magician and his evil work are accompanied by the MAGIC MOTIVE:

11.



During the narrative there are also heard the Sacrament and Grail Motive and the Spear Motive, formed by the third bar of the Sacrament Motive (No. 1). The scene gains dramatic force from the circumstance that one of his listeners is *Kundry* herself, who, lying upon the ground, rivets her wild eyes upon *Gurnemanz*, and follows his story with savage interest. Her motive breaks in upon the narrative, and

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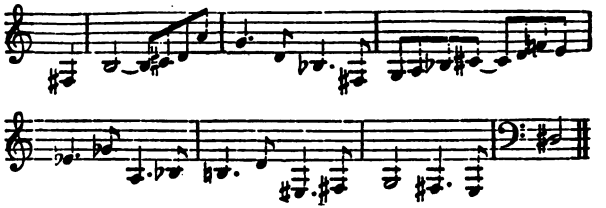
toward the close, when *Klingsor's* triumph is described, the KLINGSOR MOTIVE rings out triumphantly:

12.

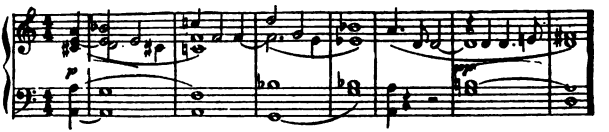


Gurnemanz concludes by telling the esquire that while *Amfortas* was praying for a sign as to who could heal him phantom lips pronounced these words:

By pity lightened
The guileless fool;
Wait for him,
My chosen tool.

This introduces an important motive, that of the PROPHECY, a phrase of simple beauty, as befits the

13.



significance of the words to which it is sung. *Gurnemanz* sings the entire motive and then the esquires take it up. They have sung only the first two lines when suddenly their prayerful voices are interrupted by shouts of dismay from the direction of the lake. A

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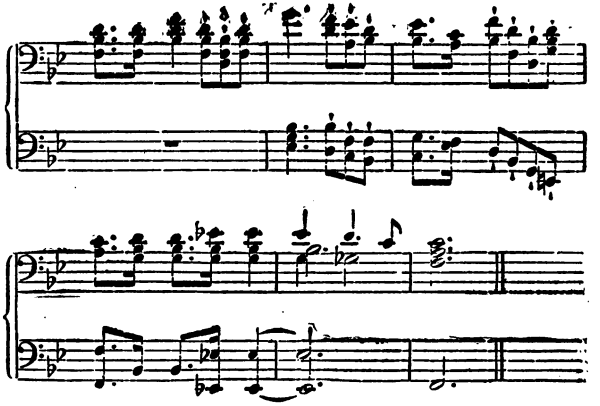
moment later a wounded swan, one of the sacred birds of the Grail brotherhood, flutters over the stage and falls dead near *Gurnemanz*. The knights follow in consternation. Two of them have seized *Parsifal*, whom they accuse of murdering the sacred bird. As he appears the magnificent PARSIFAL MOTIVE rings out on the horns:

14.



It is a buoyant and joyous motive, full of the wild spirit and freedom of this child of nature, who knows nothing of the Grail and its brotherhood or of the sacredness of the swan, and freely boasts of his skillful marksmanship.* Then follows *Gurnemanz's* noble reproof, sung to a broad and expressive melody. Even the animals are sacred in the region of the Grail

* During this episode the Swan Motive from "Lohengrin" is effectively introduced.

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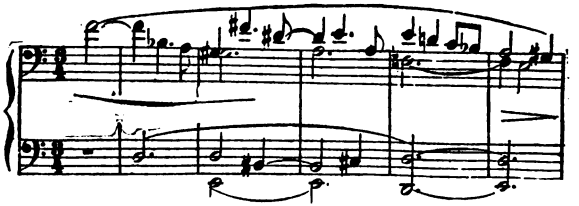
and are protected from harm. *Parsifal's* gradual awakening to a sense of wrong is one of the most touching scenes of the music drama. His childlike grief when he becomes conscious of the pain he has caused is so simple and pathetic that one cannot but be deeply affected.

After *Gurnemanz* has ascertained that *Parsifal* knows nothing of the wrong he committed in killing the swan he plies him with questions concerning his parentage. *Parsifal* is now gentle and tranquil. He tells of growing up in the woods, of running away from his mother to follow a cavalcade of knights who passed along the edge of the forest and of never having seen her since. In vain he endeavors to recall the many pet names she gave him. These memories of his early days introduce the sad motive of his suffering mother, HERZELEID:

15.



We also hear the Parsifal Motive and another phrase so akin to No. 6 that it need not be especially named. *Kundry* calls out to *Parsifal* that his mother is dead, and the youth, his fiery nature flaring up at her words, which he believes to be false, rushes threateningly

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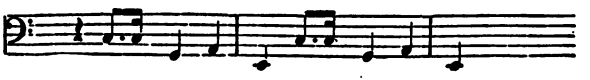
toward her. But the sudden excitement reacts upon him, and as he totters and falls *Kundry* hastens to his side to refresh him with a draught of water.

The answers which *Parsifal* has given *Gurnemanz* are so naive that the latter begins to hope *Parsifal* is the guileless fool for whose advent all have been anxiously looking so long. As the Knights of the Grail are to celebrate the love feast or communion that day, *Gurnemanz* bids the youth accompany him to the castle.

Then occurs a change of scene which in itself is highly effective dramatically. The scenery becomes a panorama drawn off toward the right, and as *Parsifal* and *Gurnemanz* face toward the left they appear to be walking in that direction. The forest disappears ; a cave opens in rocky cliffs and conceals the two ; they are then seen again in sloping passages which they appear to ascend. Long sustained trombone notes softly swell ; approaching peals of bells are heard. At last they arrive at a mighty hall which loses itself overhead in a high vaulted dome, down from which alone the light streams in.

The change of scene is ushered in by the solemn BELL MOTIVE,

16.



which is the basis of the powerful orchestral interlude accompanying the panorama, and also of the scene in

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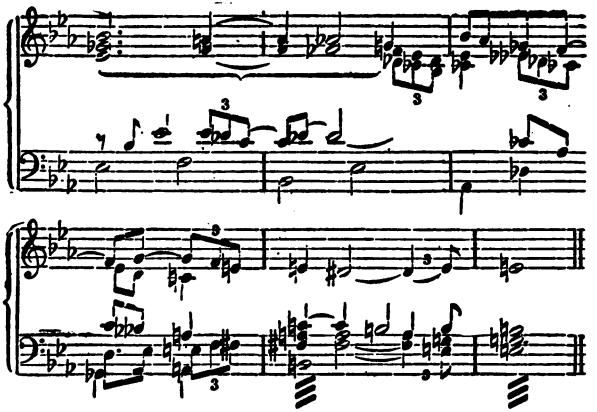
the hall of the Grail Castle. As the communion, which is soon to be celebrated, is broken in upon by the violent grief and contrition of *Amfortas*, so the majestic sweep of this symphony is interrupted by the agonized MOTIVE OF CONTRITION,

17.



which graphically portrays the spiritual suffering of the King.

With the Motive of the Sacrament resounding solemnly upon the trombones, followed by the Bell Motive, pealing out in its simplest and most impressive form, and by the Grail Motive, sonorous and powerful, *Gurnemanz* and *Parsifal* enter the hall, the old knight giving the youth a position from which he can observe the proceedings. From the deep colonnades on either side in the rear the knights issue, march with stately tread and arrange themselves at the

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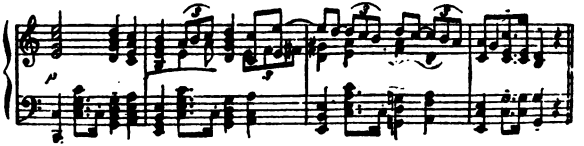
horseshoe shaped table, which incloses a raised couch. Then, while the orchestra plays a solemn processional based on the Bell Motive, they intone the chorus, "To the last love feast." After the first verse a line of pages crosses the stage on the way to ascend into the dome and the orchestra plays a graceful interlude, also based on the Bell Motive, which I quote as a striking example of how Wagner, with a few artistic touches, can give an entirely new character to a motive, in this instance converting a most solemn phrase into pretty and pleasing measures :

18.



This is repeated in slightly altered form when a second line of pages appears. The chorus of knights closes with a glorious outburst of the Grail Motive as *Amfortas* is borne in, preceded by pages who bear the covered Grail. The king is lifted upon the couch and the holy vessel is placed upon the stone table in front of it. When the Grail Motive has died away amid the pealing of the bells the youths in the gallery below the dome sing a chorus of penitence based upon the Motive of Contrition. Then the Motive of Faith (No. 4) floats down from the dome in ethereal beauty as if sung by angel voices. It is an unaccompanied chorus for boys' voices, the orchestra whispering a brief postludium like a faint

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echo of heavenly tones. This is, when sung as it was at Bayreuth, the most exquisite musical effect of the whole work, and for purity and spirituality is unsurpassed. It is an absolutely perfect example of religious music. It is a beautiful melody without the slightest worldly taint. It could never be listened to in any other than a devotional spirit, for its first notes would create such a spirit.

Titurel now summons *Amfortas* to perform his sacred office—to uncover the Grail. Tortured by contrition, the King refuses. Prominent here are the Kundry Motive and the Motive of Contrition; the Grail and Sacrament Motives are also heard with the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering. When the King's lament reaches its climax in a paroxysm of grief we have a repetition of the vehement modulations of the Sacrament Motive in the *Vorspiel.* Then are heard, softly descending from the dome, comforting voices chanting the prophecy of *Amfortas'* redemption through the Guileless Fool. The Grail is uncovered and the voices in the dome chant the chorus "Take of my body, take of my blood," to the Sacrament Motive; arpeggios, as in the *Vorspiel,* form a nebulous background to the theme. *Amfortas* is bowed in prayer. Dusk seems to spread itself through the hall. Suddenly a ray of brilliant light darts down upon the Grail which glows until a soft purple radiance diffuses itself over the scene.

Amfortas raises the Grail and blesses the wine and bread, all kneeling. When the King has again set down the Grail and its light has paled, four pages distribute

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the wine and bread, and, as the knights partake of the communion, the boys' voices in the dome chant a chorus based on the Sacrament Motive. When it has been repeated by the youths one-half of the chorus of knights intones a chant, the Bell Motive solemnly accompanying it in the orchestra, the other half chorus repeats the chant, and then the entire chorus takes up the Grail Motive, the youths and boys repeating it. To the Faith Motive the congregation prepares to go. *Amfortas* bows his head and touches his wound, thus signifying that it is bleeding afresh, his action being accompanied by the Motive of Contrition in union with the Bell Motive. *Parsifal* presses his hand to his heart, the only indication of feeling he has exhibited during the scene. We hear the Motive of the Prophecy played softly, as if to give pathetic expression to the disappointment that *Parsifal* is not the Guileless Fool whom all are so anxiously expecting. The Grail and Bell Motives lead once more to the Prophecy. *Gurnemanz* and *Parsifal* are left alone. The old knight puts this question :

Why standest thou there?
Wist thou what thou saw'st?

(*Parsifal shakes his head slightly.*)

GURNEMANZ.

Thou art then nothing but a fool!

(*He opens a small side door.*)

Come away, on thy road begone
And put my rede to use;
Leave thou our swans for the future alone
And seek thyself, gander, a goose.

(*He pushes Parsifal out and slams the door angrily on him.*)

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This jarring break upon the religious feeling awakened by the scene would be a rude ending for the act, but Wagner, with exquisite tact, allows the voices in the dome to be heard once more, and so the curtains close, amid the spiritual harmonies of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool and of the Grail Motive.

ACT II.

This act plays in *Klingsor's* magic castle and garden. The *Vorspiel* opens with the threatful Klingsor Motive, which is followed by the Magic and Contrition Motives, the wild Kundry Motive leading over to the first scene. This is enacted in the entresol of *Klingsor's* castle. The dark, threatening motives of *Klingsor's* evil powers, which compel obedience from *Kundry*, dominate the magician's summons, which causes her to rise amid bluish vapor from a pit in the entresol. Vainly she pleads for deliverance. *Klingsor* so fully controls her that he forces her to lie in wait in the magic garden for *Parsifal*, whom the magician now sees approaching. *Klingsor* watches him from the tower of the entresol. *Parsifal* easily gains the garden wall, overpowering the magician's knights, who seek to check his approach. *Klingsor* describes the youth's progress to *Kundry*, who at last disappears to her ambush in the garden with a weird, wild laugh. The orchestra, with the Parsifal Motive, gives a spirited description of the brief combat between *Parsifal* and the knights. Amid the dark har-

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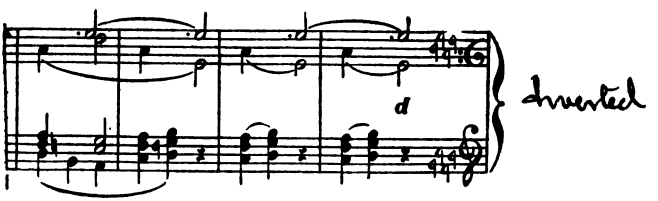
monies of the Klingsor Motive the entresol sinks out of sight and the magic garden, spreading out in all directions, with *Parsifal* standing on the wall and gazing with astonishment upon the brilliant scene, is disclosed.

The Parsifal Motive is heard and then the flower girls in great trepidation for the fate of their lover knights rush in from all sides with cries of sorrow, their confused exclamations and the orchestral accompaniment admirably enforcing their tumultuous actions.

The Parsifal Motive again introduces the next episode, as *Parsifal*, attracted by the grace and beauty of the girls, leaps down into the garden and seeks to mingle with them. It is repeated several times in the course of the scene. The girls, seeing that he does not seek to harm them, bedeck themselves with flowers and crowd about him with amorous gestures, finally circling around him as they sing this voluptuous, caressing melody:

19.



the parts being exquisitely distributed among soli and various chorus groups. The effect is enchanting, the

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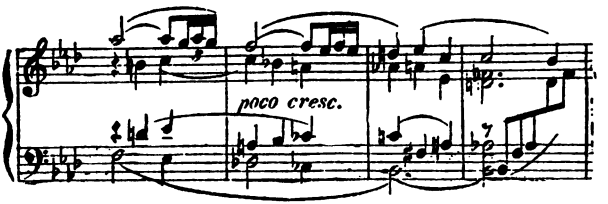
music of this episode being a marvel of sensuous grace. But their luscious exhibition of lustful temptations is vain. *Parsifal* regards them with childlike, innocent joy. Following is another portion of their song:

20.



Then they seek to impress him more deeply with their charms, at the same time quarreling among themselves over him. When their amorous rivalry has reached its height, *Kundry's* voice—"Parsifal, tarry!"—is wafted from a flowery nook nearby. His name seems to awaken memories of his youth, and as they are whispered up to him by the orchestra in the Herzeleid Motive he loses himself in reveries. *Kundry* becomes visible—a beautiful woman in soft, clinging draperies, reclining upon a bed of flowers. At her behest the flower girls disperse. She begins her seductive work by awakening in *Parsifal* still stronger reminiscences of his youth, telling him of *Herzeleid's* joy in him and of her grief when she missed him. The music of this episode is based chiefly upon the Herzeleid Motive, which assumes here a certain ca-

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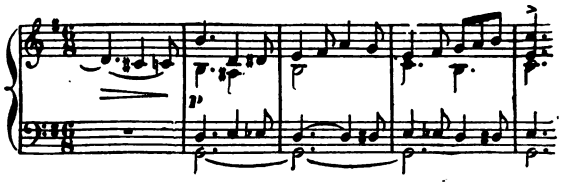
ressing grace, not, however, without its touch of pathos:

21.



When *Kundry* speaks of his mother sorrowing for him another expressive phrase—a second Herzeleid Motive—is introduced:

22.

Parsifal's cries of self reproach find expression in the Herzeleid Motives, ending, however, with the Elegiac Motive. *Kundry*, having now wrought him up to a highly emotional, sensitive state, bends over him and, drawing him slowly toward her, presses a burning kiss upon his lips. But the harmonies of magic which accompanied her action yield suddenly to the Elegiac Motive and the Motive of Contrition, followed by the Kundry Motive as *Parsifal* exclaims: "Amfortas!" The very kiss with which *Kundry* intended to plant the seeds of unholy lust in *Parsifal's* breast has imparted to the "Guileless Fool" a

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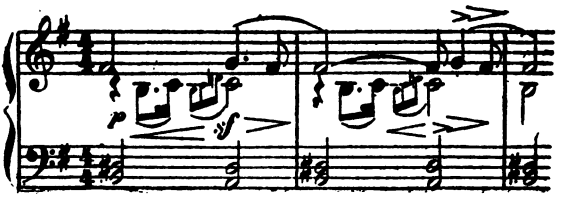
knowledge of evil. He suddenly sees before him the suffering, penitent *Amfortas*, and there on the bed of flowers lies the sorceress who seduced him from his sacred office. Hence the dramatic significance of the Kundry Motive following *Parsifal's* exclamation. The Grail, Sacrament and Elegiac Motives give poignancy to his grief, as the meaning of the scene he witnessed in the Grail Castle becomes clear to him in the light of his own temptation.

With a caressing variation of her motive (p. 180, l. 1, b. 1, &c.), *Kundry* seeks again to inveigle *Parsifal* in the meshes of her charms; but, with the Motive of Contrition forcefully accompanying his action, he pushes her away. *Kundry's* passion seems to gather force from his determination. She is driven by conflicting emotions. Longing for redemption the sorcerous power of *Klingsor* yet inflames her lust. She pleads with *Parsifal*, relates to him the tragic story of her curse and entreats him to yield her one hour of unholy joy. At her mention of the cross bearing Saviour, in whose face she laughed, the GOOD FRIDAY MOTIVE is heard:

23.



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We also hear a portion of the Motive of Contrition (p. 184, l. 3, b. 2, &c.) and a variation of it (p. 185, l. 2, b. 2, &c.), and the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering (p. 186, l. 3, b. 4, &c.). But *Parsifal* remains unmoved. His mission is clear to him. He couches his reply at first in the chaste tones of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool, and then in the ethereal harmonies of the Motive of Faith. In vain *Kundry* pleads in the seductive tones of the flower girl's measures. *Parsifal* is firm. He promises her redemption if she will lead him to *Amfortas*. But the power for evil is rampant within her. She seeks to embrace him. He thrusts her from him. Wild with passion she calls upon *Klingsor* to aid her. The magician appears upon the wall of the castle and hurls the holy spear at *Parsifal*. It remains suspended above him. Grasping it he makes with it the sign of the cross. With a great crash garden and castle vanish as if swallowed by the earth, leaving nothing but a dreary waste. *Kundry* has, with a wild shriek, collapsed. From the crumbling ruins of the castle wall *Parsifal*, before going his way, calls to her: "Thou knowest where you again can find me!"

Act III.

The *Vorspiel* shows *Parsifal* wandering through the wilderness in quest of the Castle of the Grail. That vision of *Amfortas'* suffering which came to him at the supreme moment of temptation filled him with pity and thus, "by pity lightened," he is seeking out

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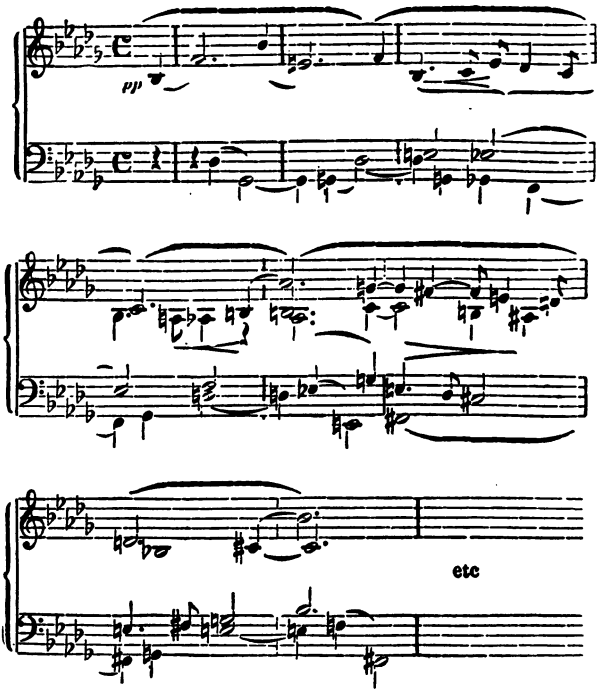
the king that he may heal the wound by touching it with the holy spear and put an end to *Amfortas'* spiritual and physical torture. The *Vorspiel* opens with the MOTIVE OF THE WILDERNESS:

24.



followed by the WANDER MOTIVE, which strongly resembles No. 6. This leads through the Grail, Elegiac

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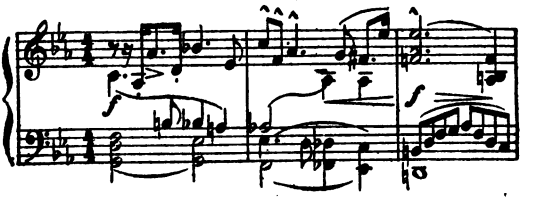
and Kundry Motives, to a new version of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool:

25.



With the Magic Power and Klingsor Motives the *Vorspiel* passes into the act proper, the scene being laid in the vicinity of the Grail Castle. It is Good Friday and the grace of the day seems to rest upon the landscape. Toward the background is a slightly rising flowery meadow. To the right is a rocky ascent. To the left, on the edge of the wood, is a spring and opposite it a plain hut. It is early morning. *Gurnemanz*, greatly aged, comes forth from the hut. Having heard groans in the direction of a hedge near the spring he parts the bushes and there discovers *Kundry* lying as if dead. He bears her forth and revives her. While she does not thank him, her whole demeanor is softened and she stammers out, "Dienen! Dienen!" (Let me serve! Let me serve!) The two exclamations are all that is sung by *Kundry* during this act; but she has considerable by-play and, as the gentleness of her demeanor must contrast greatly with her wildness during the first act and her

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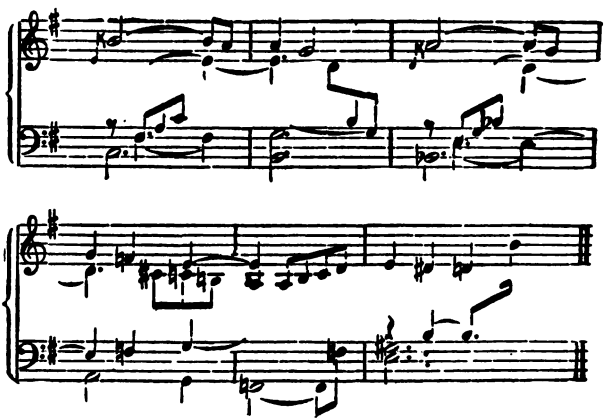
seductive importuning in the second, an actress finds great scope for her powers in this character, which, though not an agreeable one until the last act, is nevertheless an impressive dramatic creation.

During this episode there are heard parts of a new motive, that of SALVATION, which in its full form is as follows:

26.



Following as they do (p. 204, l. 3, b. 2, &c., and p. 205, l. 2, b. 2, &c.) upon the sombre measures of the Magic, Klingsor and Wander Motives, without, however, reaching their entire development, they seem prophetic of the salvation which is to be *Kundry's* reward of penitence. Especially when *Gurnemanz* seeks to awaken her with the glad tidings of spring, it has

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a vernal brightness and buoyancy. As if to emphasize the comforting assurance of this motive *Kundry's* awakening is accompanied by the Grail Motive; and although, as she opens her eyes and utters a terrified shriek, her wild motive courses through the orchestra, the music is soon softened and attuned to her penitent demeanor as she leaves *Gurnemanz* and enters the hut.

Gurnemanz marvels at her change of spirit, and wonders if it can be the sacred character of the day which has calmed her nature. The Sacrament, Grail, Good Friday (p. 209, l. 1, b. 3, &c.) and Elegiac Motives echo his soliloquy. *Kundry* issues from the hut bearing an earthen caraffe, and goes toward the spring, the orchestra breathing forth soft measures faintly premonitory of the "Good Friday Spell" (No. 29). Noticing someone approaching, she points him out to *Gurnemanz*.

Foreshadowed by his motive in sombre harmonies, *Parsifal*, clad in black armor, his visor down, comes upon the scene and seats himself upon a little knoll near the spring. *Gurnemanz* chides him for coming armed upon holy ground and on Good Friday, and explains to him the sacred significance of the day.

Parsifal arises, thrusts the spear into the earth, lays shield and sword beside it, opens his visor, removes his helmet and places it also beside the spear, before which he kneels in prayer. *Gurnemanz* recognizes him, and *Kundry*, whom he beckons to his side as she issues from the hut, confirms the recognition

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by an affirmative inclination of the head. The Spear and Parsifal Motives—the latter still in sombre harmonies—accompany *Parsifal's* silent prayer and *Gurnemanz's* recognition. Then, as *Parsifal* raises his eyes reverentially toward the point of the spear, we hear the Elegiac Motive, which passes over to the Motive of the Prophecy, reaching, however, immediately afterward a superb climax when *Gurnemanz* recognizes the spear, the climax being enforced by the deeply emotional accents of the Motive of Contrition as *Kundry*, overcome by her feelings, turns away her face.

With the spiritually uplifting strains of the Grail Motive *Parsifal* holds out his hand to *Gurnemanz* in greeting. He tells of wandering in search of the realm of the Grail, the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering (p. 216, l. 3, b. 1, &c.) leading to the eloquent measures of the Grail Motive as he proclaims that he bears with him the holy spear. *Gurnemanz's* apostrophe of the divine grace which has wrought this wonder opens with the Motive of the Sacrament, leading to the Good Friday Motive and to an exquisite variation of the Faith Motive, familiar from the first act (No. 10), with a continuation which adds to its ethereal beauty. His narration of the sufferings which the Grail knights have endured and of *Titurel's* death moves *Parsifal* to an outburst of grief. As he seems about to succumb to his emotional excitement *Gurnemanz* supports him and lets him gently down upon the grassy knoll, while *Kundry* hurries for a caraffe of water. *Gurnemanz*, however, gently wards her off. Water from the holy

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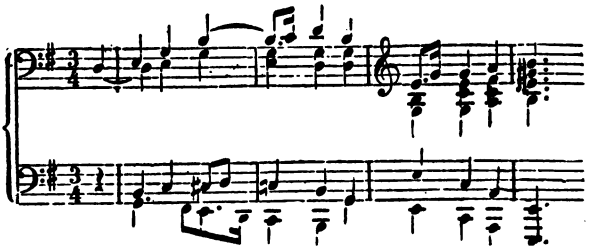
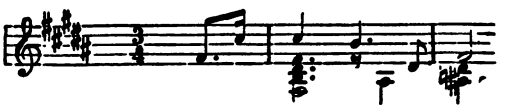
spring itself shall refresh him. The stately MOTIVE OF BAPTISM

27.



and the second MOTIVE OF SALVATION

28



accompany *Gurnemanz's* words. The old knight and *Kundry* then turn *Parsifal* toward the spring and divest him of his armor, the knight assuring him that he will be conducted that day to *Amfortas*. Amid the tender strains of the Salvation Motives *Kundry* laves his feet; then as *Gurnemanz* baptizes him the Motive of Baptism and the second Forgiveness Motive reverentially accompany the rite. *Kundry* draws forth a golden vial, and amid the gently pathetic strains of the Good Friday Motive anoints his feet.

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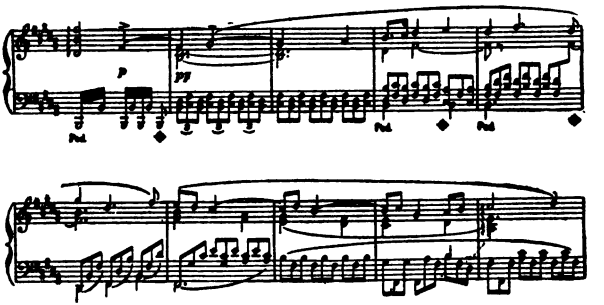
Parsifal, taking the vial from her, hands it to *Gurnemanz*, that the latter may anoint him king. As the old knight does so a majestic climax is produced by the Parsifal, Prophecy and Grail Motives. *Parsifal* fulfills his first sacred office by baptizing *Kundry*, the Baptism and Faith Motives leading over to the Elegiac Motive, which introduces the exquisite Good Friday Spell. A feeling of perfect repose has entered *Parsifal's* soul; a blessed calm seems to have descended upon nature. *Gurnemanz* beautifully attributes to the holy day the tranquillity which reigns over forest and meadow; and with tender grace the music of the scene seems to breathe forth the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." The scene opens with the GOOD FRIDAY SPELL:

29.



Then are heard (p. 232, l. 4, b. 1, &c.) the gentle notes of the first Salvation Motive. This is followed by the

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Sacrament Motive when *Parsifal* deems that Good Friday should be a day of sorrow rather than of tranquillity, but the Good Friday Spell and the Grail Motive peacefully unfold themselves when *Gurnemanz* attributes the vernal beauty of the day to the rejoicing of nature over its redemption. *Kundry* is deeply affected; she gazes with moist eyes up to *Parsifal*, who, amid exquisite musical phrases, gently presses a holy kiss upon her brow.

The distant tolling of bells is heard, and mingling with it the funereal measures of the music of *Titurel's* obsequies, and then to the majestic measures of the Parsifal Motive *Parsifal*, *Gurnemanz* and *Kundry* set out for the Castle of the Grail, the old knight having clad the young king in the mantle of the Grail knighthood. It was originally intended that another panoramic change, like that in the first act, should occur here. but Wagner wisely refrained from repeating this mechanical effect, and the scene is changed to the Grail hall behind a drop.

The hall wears a gloomy aspect. The communion tables have been removed. From one side enter a train of knights bearing *Titurel's* bier; from the other, those bearing *Amfortas* upon a litter. They beseech *Amfortas* to uncover the Grail as part of the obsequies, but *Amfortas*, lamenting his guilt, refuses. When *Titurel's* features are exposed, all cry out with grief, *Amfortas* raising himself upon his litter and turning toward his father's corpse with a burst of agonized self reproaches. The knights crowd about him and threateningly command him to uncover the Grail.

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Then, in frenzied woe, *Amfortas*, the motive of suffering forcefully accompanying his action (p. l. 2, b. 5, &c.), tears open his garments and bids knights slay him. At this dramatic moment *Parsifal*, who has entered unnoticed with *Gurnemanz* and *Kundry*, steps forth from among the knights, the tragic measures which portrayed *Amfortas'* frenzy yielding to the comforting strains of the Grail Motive, and this in turn giving way to the Elegiac Motive, as *Parsifal* touches *Amfortas'* wound with his holy spear. *Amfortas'* features are illumined with transport as he feels his physical and spiritual pain yielding to the touch of the holy spear. The motive of his agony grows fainter and finally passes into the Motive of the Prophecy. Amid the resounding chords of the Parsifal Motive *Parsifal* strides to the centre of the hall and raises aloft the holy spear upon which all gaze ecstatically, the Sacrament Motive leading to the Motives of Faith and Contrition, this last being followed by part of the Motive of the Prophecy, which has now been fulfilled.

Parsifal ascends the steps of the sanctuary and takes from it the Grail; as he kneels its glow begins to diffuse itself. A beautiful light shimmers in the dome and gradually spreads through the hall. A white dove descends and hovers above *Parsifal*. *Kundry*, gazing ecstatically upon her Saviour, sinks slowly down in death; *Amfortas* and *Gurnemanz* kneel in homage before him as he sways the Grail over the praying knights.

The music of this entire scene floats upon ethereal arpeggios. The Motive of Faith especially is exquis-

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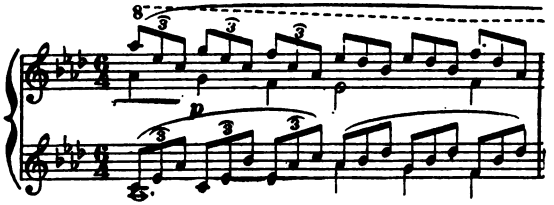
itely accompanied, its spiritual harmonies finally appearing in this form :

30.



There are also heard the Motives of Prophecy and of the Sacrament, as the knights on the stage and the youths and boys in the dome chant. The Grail Motive, which is prominent throughout the scene, rises as if in a spirit of gentle religious triumph and brings, with the Sacrament Motive, the work to a close.

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